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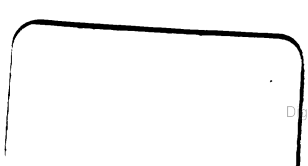

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Christopher R. Eliot

From 'Father' -

March 25, 1886 —

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TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORY

MARTINEAU

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New York

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TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORY

BY

JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D.

LATE PRINCIPAL OF MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

Κινεῖ πως πάντα τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν θεῖον. λόγου δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λύγος, ἀλλά τι κρεῖττον. τί οὖν ἂν κρεῖττον καὶ ἐπιστήμης εἴποι πλὴν θεός;

ARIST. ETH. EUD. VII xiv.

Second Edition, revised

VOL. I

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1886

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IN GRATITUDE TO MY TEACHERS,

OF WHATEVER AGE OR SCHOOL,

I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO THE PUPILS

WHOM DURING FIFTY YEARS

I HAVE BROUGHT TO SIT AT THEIR FEET,

IN THE PURE SEARCH FOR TRUTH.

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PREFACE.

THESE volumes would have appeared to more advantage had they been preceded, as originally designed, by a compendium of logical psychology, presenting, in explicit form, the principles and processes of knowledge which are here assumed and implicitly operative throughout. Such a manual has been written and repeatedly re-written: but the literature of what is called *Erkenntnisslehre* has so rapidly increased, that at last I am unable to overtake it: I relinquish, therefore, the hope of adequately equipping my *avant-courier* for his mission. I consign the old herald to the superannuates' almshouse, and am content to let the Ethical Doctrine introduce and explain itself.

In the absence of regular Prolegomena, a few words of informal prelude may perhaps be helpful and welcome to the reader, before his patience is more severely tasked. In studying the later productions of a writer on abstruse subjects, I have more than once found myself repelled by a table of contents bristling with barbarous terminology, and been dismayed by sentences and pages which, though visible and grammatical enough, lay before me in total intellectual darkness; and, after days and even weeks of meditative scrutiny and experimental exegesis, I have reached only some hesitating solution of riddles too slippery for a persistent grasp. If any accident has afterwards brought me into contact with the same author's immature,—perhaps

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fugitive and forgotten,—writings, I have found them, to my surprise, not only lucid in themselves, but alive with scintillæ that dart upon the impenetrable surface of what I had read before, and relieve it with points of light. Still more, if, following up this experience, I have then gone with him through the series of his writings, and fallen in chronologically with the turns and openings of his thought, I have insensibly gained the key to his final mysteries, and, having passed through the intermediate dialects, can now construe the new language by the old. Nay, I confess to having accepted aid from a far more commonplace commentary on the difficulties of an author's work, viz. the realisation of his personal characteristics, his human relations, his preponderant sympathies, and the study especially of the transitions of his thought and the testing crises of his life. Intellectual pride and self-ignorance alone can blind us to the fact that systems of philosophical opinion grow from the mind's instinctive effort to unify by sufficient reason, and justify by intelligible pleas, its deepest affections and admirations. At all events, I attempt no more; and shall not hesitate, therefore, to touch upon one or two of the personal experiences, to which these volumes owe their chief features.

When I first woke up, before and during my College life, to the interest of moral and metaphysical speculations, I carried into them, from previous training for the profession of civil engineer, a store of exclusively scientific conceptions, rendered familiar in the elementary study of mathematics, mechanics, and chemistry. Small as it was, it was my all, and necessarily dictated the only rules of judgment which I could apply. I had nothing to take with me into logical and ethical problems but the maxims and postulates of physical knowledge; and as the instructions of the philo-

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sophical class-room, excellent of their kind, moved strictly within the same limits, I was inevitably shut up in the habit of interpreting the human phenomena by the analogy of external nature. Steeped in the 'empirical' and 'necessarian' mode of thought, I served out successive terms of willing captivity to Locke and Hartley, to Collins, Edwards, and Priestley, to Bentham and James Mill; and though at times I was driven to disaffection by the dogmatism and acrid humours of the last two of these philosophers, my allegiance was restored and brightened by literary and personal relations with the younger Mill. His vast knowledge, his intellectual conscientiousness, his analytical skill, his sincere humanity, presented the excellencies of his school in so finished a form as to proclaim him its undisputed coryphæus, and reanimate the confidence of its disciples.

Greek and Latin critics have noticed, with amusement, the tone of plump assurance in which the ancient Epicurean was accustomed to propound and argue the principles of his system; as if to doubt were to be disgraced, and he had freshly arrived from the council of the gods[1]. Whether the school is naturally affected by this characteristic, and still retains its large balance of positiveness unexpended, I cannot pretend to judge. But memory too faithfully tells me that, in my own period of zeal for its doctrines, I amply deserved the satirical rebuke which I have cited. So self-evident appeared the maxims of mechanical causality on which I stood, and so clear the whole surrounding field within my sharply defined horizon, that in my heart I

[1] Tum Velleius, fidenter sane, ut solent isti, nihil tam verens quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videretur, tanquam modo ex deorum concilio et ex Epicuri intermundiis descendisset,—Audite, inquit, &c.—Cicero, de Natura Deorum, i. 8.

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deemed it blindness if any one professed a different vision from my own, and never suspected that it might be due to a far-sightedness which reached a zone beyond, and fetched in the modifying lights of other relations. It is no wonder then that, in skimming over my notes of work in those distant years, I seem to be communing with some tight-swathed logical prig, in whose jerky confidence and angular mimicry of life I am humbled to recognise the image of myself. If any one believes the fault to be purely personal and in no way chargeable on the system of thought, I shall not resist the imputation; certainly he can select, from the records of the same school, many examples of true modesty and reverence. But unless the old tradition is wholly illusory, there must be some average coexistence of the moral with the intellectual phenomenon; though it may still be doubted whether the doctrine plays the part of cause or of effect to the objectionable temper.

If, in conformity with the advice of Callicles[1], I had concerned myself with philosophy only as an element in liberal education, and desisted from it in later life, the modicum which I had picked up might have stereotyped itself in my habitual thought, and indirectly have exercised some influence, even when it was forgotten, upon the physiognomy of character. This is all that such studies accomplish for the great majority of busy men: such shreds of speculative tissue as cling to them in permanence and float into consciousness as they listen to a sermon or meditate a speech, are memories of the tutor's room or the examination hall, and do but reproduce the past. But it fell to my lot to be always *teaching* these subjects; and *that*, not merely as a lecturer to an inexpert audience too ready to take my word,

[1] Plato, Gorgias, 484, 485.

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but as a tutor to students, not always my juniors even, and often of keen intellectual discernment and insatiable thirst for the deepest draughts of truth. A lonely writer on speculative problems, taking his own way, chooses probably the line of least resistance, and makes it more his beaten track than ever; but under a fusillade of questions from a class of sharpshooters, the instructor has to look well to his defences, perhaps to fall back upon less exposed ground; is at all events tested by a perpetual dialectic, in which to learn his weakness will be his best gain of strength. Under such discipline, in concurrence no doubt with deepening experience of the inward contents of human life, I seemed to discover a hitherto unnoticed factor in all the products which I had taken as explained; to recognise, after resolving all knowledge into relations, the presence of an invisible condition of relation itself; and the more I scrutinised the physical science assumptions, which I had carried as axioms into philosophy, the less could I rest in them as ultimate and valid for all thought. Above all, I had to concede to the self-conscious mind itself, both as knowing and as willing, an autonomous function distinct from each and all the phenomena known and changes willed,—a self-identity, as unlike as possible to any growing aggregate of miscellaneous and dissimilar experiences. Visiting me first as mere suspicions, these ideas insensibly loosened the set attitude of my convictions, before I became distinctly conscious of a gradual veering in the direction of my thought: the same text-books were still in use, though doubtless with more frequent comments of dissent; but in effect, I was educating myself out of a school into which I supposed that I was educating others.

A syllabus of my College lectures having fallen into

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Mr. J. S. Mill's hands (early in 1841), he noticed the change and, with his keen intellectual glance, measured its extent better than I had done myself: for old attachment and admiration still lingered with me and led me to minimise my breach with the past; and what was dim to me, seen through the spectrum of various feeling, was well defined to him, in his clear logical light. Though he saw to the bottom of my apostacy, he did not cut me off as a lost soul. On the contrary, his manifestation of friendly interest in my future work at the old problems on new lines was gracious and respectful: in expressing his desire to see its results, he exhorted me against long delay of their publication: on these 'great subjects,' he said, 'I do not want to have to wait for your lectures, which, like Brown's, will no doubt be published some day; but before that time I may *very likely be studying them* [these great subjects] *in another state of existence*' (May 21, 1841). This unexpected turn of thought it is which has chiefly saved my remembrance of the correspondence. From a flexible compliant man of the world, accustomed to be 'all things to all men,' it would have had little significance; but coming from one who was scrupulously precise in word, absolutely sincere in profession, and tempted by no play of humour to empty graces of accommodation, it seemed to me an interesting trait.

It was the irresistible pleading of the moral consciousness which first drove me to rebel against the limits of the merely scientific conception. It became incredible to me that nothing was possible except the actual; and the naturalistic uniformity could no longer escape some breach in its closed barrier to make room for the ethical alternative. The secret misgivings which I had always felt at either discarding or perverting the terms which constitute

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the vocabulary of character,—'responsibility,' 'guilt,' 'merit,' 'duty,'—came to a head, and insisted upon speaking out and being heard; and to their reiterated question, 'Is there then no *ought to be* other than *what is?*' I found the negative answer of Diderot intolerable, and all other answer impossible. This involved a surrender of determinism, and a revision of the doctrine of causation: or rather, I should say, a recall of the outlawed causes from their banishment and degradation to the rank of antecedents; and constituted therefore a retrograde movement on the line of Comte's law, back from physics to metaphysics; terminating in the definition that a cause is that which determines the indeterminate.

During a fifteen months' furlough (granted me in 1848–9), the inroads upon my early modes of thought might here have paused for a while, after gaining the territory which seemed necessary to the life of conscience; had I not passed (now thirty-six years ago) through a kind of second education in Germany, mainly under the admirable guidance of the late Professor Trendelenburg. That I might learn the utmost from so great an Aristotelian, I gave myself chiefly to Greek studies, and only read more largely authors of whom I had supposed myself to know something before. The effect I cannot describe but as a new intellectual birth: after a temporary struggle out of the English into the Greek moulds of conception, I seemed to pierce, through what had been words before, into contact with living thought, and the black grammatical text was aglow with luminous philosophy. It was as if the mental stereoscope through which I had looked at Plato or Aristotle had had its double picture,—Greek and English,—with distorted halves, producing only a blurred and overlapping flat; whilst now the

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slide of true correspondence was there, and the eye, after a momentary strain of adaptation, beheld the symmetrical reality in all its dimensions. The experience thus forced upon me by a new way of entrance upon ancient literature could not fail to spread, and carry an interpreting light into modern studies; it was essentially the gift of fresh conceptions, the unsealing of hidden openings of self-consciousness, with unmeasured corridors and sacred halls behind; and, once gained, was more or less available throughout the history of philosophy, and lifted the darkness from the pages of Kant and even Hegel. It was impossible to resist or distrust this gradual widening of apprehension: it was as much a fact as the sight of Alps I had never visited before. I thus came into the same plight, in respect of the cognitive and æsthetic side of life, that had already befallen me in regard to the moral. The metaphysic of the world had come home to me, and never again could I say that phenomena, in their clusters and chains, were all, or find myself in a universe with no categories but the like and unlike, the synchronous and successive. The possible also *is*, whether it happens or not; and its categories, of the right, the beautiful, the necessarily true, may have their contents defined and held ready for realisation, whatever centuries lapse ere they appear. To do this is the work, not of objective science, but of self-reflection.

By this division of labour, the whole group of natural sciences is left absolutely free to legitimate development, without the possibility of collision with Ethics. Apprehension of facts, in their laws, being the business of the one, the appreciation of springs of action, in their ranks, that of the other, they can nohow contrive to contradict each other: and if ever either physicist or moralist fears

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lest discovery should relax the force or modify the incidence of human obligation, it can only be from inexact conception of the respective provinces. Thus the uneasiness so often manifested lest the theory of Evolution should eat away the very basis of human duty has no justification, except in the general prevalence of the very confusion of thought which it exemplifies. We have long been familiar with the process of growth in organisms, with the weaving and discrimination of tissue and the modifications of brain; and the extension of this process of development from the thread of the single animal life to the chain of species introduces no disturbing problem: it supplies new chapters of natural history; but changes not a word in the eternal law of right. Moral existence is not constituted by organism, simple or complex, or by instincts lodged in it to do its work; but by the presence of a self-conscious, free, and reflecting subject, to whom both organism and instincts are objective facts; and as no such presence can be alleged in concomitance with the prior animal forms, the evolution misses all contact with the essential prerequisite of morals. Though the modern doctrine, therefore, should widen its conquests till the whole story of nature is recast, and every present manual of instruction in the laws of her phenomena is obsolete, the interest in that vast revolution would be purely scientific; without affecting in the least the inner duties and pieties of human life.

It will be seen from these remarks why, in the following pages, I cannot treat Ethics as a *Science*, giving account of that which *is*. It would be nearer the truth to call it an *Art*, or system of rules directed upon an *end*. But the species of ends contemplated in the common use of the word *Art*, differs in two respects from that which here

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concerns us; *they* are products external to the artist,—as a house or a picture; and they are definite acts or objects. The *end* of the moral consciousness, on the other hand, is intrinsic,—complete for the moment in simple compliance with its own law; and is also indefinite in its range, being nothing less than a perfection eternally in advance of the will. To define this ideal of the conscience would be the business of Ethics, did it not, as infinite, transcend definition: we make the nearest approach to that impossible function, if we lay down the lines of direction which, when produced, trace the true path towards the ultimate perfection.

Thus to indicate what *ought to be* is, however, impossible without a large study of *what is;* so that Ethics are dependent upon scientific conditions, though not complete in them. Two classes of facts it is indispensable for them to know: what are the *springs* of voluntary conduct, and what are its *effects;* and the systematic reduction of both these under intellectual cognisance is involved in the problem of Moral Philosophy. The chief attention is usually concentrated upon the latter. In the following treatise, the preponderance is assigned to the former, for reasons explained in due course.

The chapter on Spinoza in the present work is not a reproduction or abridgment of the monograph on that philosopher which I published two years ago; but a fresh treatment of the given material which is necessarily common to both; marked indeed by no change of interpretation or judgment on important points, but only by such shifting of emphasis as the special exigency of an ethical treatise demanded.

I am conscious that a rigorous reader may complain of

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this book, as combining elements too heterogeneous, and say that it is neither a history, nor a system, of philosophical opinion, but a little of both. Perhaps he is right: if he is, he hits a fault, not of the book alone, but of the author. The mixture of exposition and of search in these volumes is the involuntary expression of personal experience. I have always been a teacher; I have not ceased to be a learner; in the one capacity, I must tell the little that I know; in the other, I must strive after some glimpse of the immeasurable light beyond. I cannot rest contentedly on the past; I cannot take a step towards the future without its support. Only by taking to heart and reporting what I have heard in the chief schools of wisdom, can I become aware of the places blank with a remaining silence, or win the resources and quicken the impulse to reclaim them for intelligible speech. The concurrence of criticism and construction is but the renunciation of individual self-sufficiency, and a homage due to the cumulative continuity of human thought. Of the many authors passed under review in these volumes, I do not remember one to whom I am not grateful for intellectual service or delight.

A theory elicited, like that in the following pages, from mere interpretation of the moral consciousness is open to the charge of depending upon an act of faith: it collapses at once for any one who persuades himself that the moral consciousness is not to be believed. Unless he can accept his inward assurance of free-will and of a Divine authority in right, the whole organism of deduced rules lies in ruins. Why then have I not done more to verify these essential positions? Why have I been content to give them explicit statement, and claim them as postulates? Do I not thus leave the whole scheme hanging in the air? I not only

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acknowledge that it is so, but particularly desire to fix attention upon the fact, for two reasons: (1) because it compels us to realise, in a definite instance, what alone 'verification' can mean; that in the connection of truth with truth, on any line of knowledge, you come to the end of your tether at some point,—a point which is fixed by no other, but stands fast in your trust; that, on different tracks of knowledge, these terminal links are different: and that, when all are gathered in presence of each other, no logical hammer, though worked by a Vulcan, can make a chain of them all, or give primacy to one: so that no 'verification' remains possible, except the reciprocal security of an equilibrated system of faiths, and the general devastation if any one is expelled or explodes upon the rest. (2) The particular averments of the moral consciousness which are here accepted as postulates form the organic connection between Ethics and Religion, and define the relation between the human spirit and the Divine; and so far as they can be lifted out of immediate knowledge, and submitted to mediate tests of certainty, it can only be by carrying them into the court of Metaphysics, to be tried among the questions of transcendent Ontology. Pleadings so extensive it was impossible to intercalate in the midst of a compend of ethical experience: they more naturally belong to the ulterior theory of Religion, to the characteristic conceptions of which they must make continual appeal. For some such sequel to the present treatise, these topics are reserved; in case the evening twilight of life should linger a little longer with me, and leave my powers of industry still unspent.

LONDON,
January 1, 1885.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In this edition a few passages are modified or annotated, in order to guard against misconceptions occasioned by their inexact form. That it does not more largely profit by the valuable criticisms which have come under my notice is due to the fact that, for the most part, they address themselves to large features of the book which are necessarily deliberate and unalterable,—its plan, its arrangement, its postulates, its central doctrine. Such criticisms are more instructive to me than comments upon corrigible faults; but, thankful as I am for them, I can respond to them only by explaining, on reflection, why I still prefer the method and positions which they assail.

In the classification of theories, I have apparently surprised some of my most respected readers by finding the whole contents of the *psychological* category within the limits of Christendom, and especially by excluding from it the Ethics of the Socratic school. If I had called in question the psychological character of Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, the imputation of paradox would have been most just. So far, however, is this from being the case, that a large part of the chapter on Plato is occupied with an exposition of his 'fourfold moral psychology': and Aristotle's writings are spoken of as a vast repository of mental and moral facts gathered from profound self-knowledge. Nor do I suppose it possible to treat Ethics at all without continual reference, direct or indirect, to psychological experience; there is no other

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material from which a doctrine of character can be constructed. But it does not follow that the magazine whence you draw your facts and set them in order, supplies your *theory* too. *This* you may perhaps dispense with altogether, and be content with defining the rules of the moral *Art;* or you may bring it with you from some larger sphere which moulds and tempers the life of man. It was *Theories* alone, supplying a rationale of the ultimate postulates of morals, that I was concerned to classify; and these are psychological or not, according as they find what they want within the personal self-consciousness, or resort for it to a source beyond. It is a question, therefore, not where Ethics lie, but whence they are approached by the philosophical theorist: and the place assigned to Plato simply says, that upon his anthropological theory he descends from his cosmical; that his speculative movement is *into* psychology, not *out* of it. Against this proposition it is irrelevant to set his appeals to inward experience, his keen analyses of motive, his cleansing denudation of the surface-deposits of character: so little have I thought it affected by these things as to say of the Socratic philosophers (II. p. 131) that 'they look for their whole moral world *within*, among the phenomena of the conscious and self-conscious nature; not among the conditions of external action.' Of still less avail against it is the fact that Plato determines the virtues by the parts of the soul; for these parts of the soul he further determines by the parts of the cosmic soul, which in their turn are found in the admixture of the eternal νοῦς with indefinite necessity,—precisely the pedigree of Ethics which I desired to mark. It is admitted that the 'psychical theory is crossed by the metaphysical theory of the Idea of the Good': I submit that 'theory' there is none, except this

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'metaphysical' one; for as, in the Greek sense, a virtue is nothing but the best state of a faculty, virtues and faculties fall into concurrent classification without any theory at all. And in distributing the ἀρεταί to the several 'parts of the soul,' Plato refers all that is distinctively human, i. e. the total conditions of the moral life, to the immortal element in it, which enters it from a transcendent sphere, and is alone capable of self-conscious and rational choice. This order of derivation, with its connected doctrine of reminiscence, has always been regarded as the equivalent of the modern notion of *à priori* ideas, and to stand no less in antithesis to the method of empirical induction. Blot out from Plato's thought this over-arching heaven, with its constellations of greater and lesser εἴδη, and his definitions of human qualities, his criticisms of conduct, his pictures of life, his rules of discipline, while retaining their literary and practical interest, lose all that blends them into the unity of theory. Nothing less than this is contained in his own statement, that the mental arts which, depending on sensible experience, are wrought out by practice, viz. those which are concerned with matters of human opinion or with natural phenomena, past, present, or to come, can never have any stability or certainty, or satisfy the soul's need of pure truth; that the object-matter of all genuine knowledge must be sought in the eternal and unchangeable and universal realities which subsist in all particular things; and that to these all else must stand in a posterior and secondary line[1].

The case of Aristotle is not very different. Even if he were rightly called the founder of both Psychology and Ethics, it would not follow that he propounded a psychological theory of Ethics. The determining principles of his

[1] Philebus 55 E, 58, 59 C.

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whole philosophy lay far behind these anthropologic fields; and when he arrived at them in his advance from the starting-point, he could not help finding them occupied by groups of mental phenomena, by certain differences among which the area of the latter was railed off within the embrace of the former; nor, in describing their contents, could he fail to be a psychologist. But we can no more, on this account, attribute to him a psychological theory of ethics, than we call a man a *materialist* because he reports some particular set of material facts. His treatment of the phenomena of character is partly that of the descriptive naturalist, whose work terminates in orderly classification; partly that of an expert in some special skill, who collects and estimates the several means to a particular end. In the former case, the mode of procedure involves no theory at all, but a mere sorting-out of similars; in the latter, one which may indeed be true, viz. that the qualities which conduce to personal well-being (εὐδαιμονία)[1] constitute, by doing so, the essence of virtue, but which certainly is not psychological, since in the moral self-consciousness it finds instead of its evidence, its chief difficulty. In this subordination of character to an ulterior end, associating it with health, competency, knowledge, gentle birth, adequate length of life,—all of them conditions of the same end[2],—he makes its essential relation one which is equally occupied by unmoral things, and reduces the investigation of it to a study of cause and effect, i.e. to a science of what is, not an apprehension of what *should be*. Accordingly, he provides no intelligible place for the conception of *Obligation*, except in the conditional sense—'*If* you want the end, you must apply the means'; and while throwing light all round upon the outer layers of conduct and disposition, he leaves in the dark the

[1] Nicom. Eth. I. vii. 3–8. [2] Ibid. I. x. 15, 16.

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central idea of Duty, which moralises all. Yet he is continually using it, though without contemplating it: he works with it as a ready tool, though not towards it as the final object of ethical thought; for in his account of this or that virtue no formula is more frequent with him than that it is a certain affection ὡς δεῖ καὶ ὅτε δεῖ καὶ περὶ ἃ δεῖ καὶ οὗ ἕνεκα; without any explanation of this δεῖ, unless by such tautological addition as κατ' ἀξίαν γάρ[1], or ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν[2]. Thus, after defining Courage as the quality intermediate between audacity and cowardice, themselves left undefined except as defect and excess of Fear, he fixes the mid-point by this very formula, and therefore tells you no more than that the right bearing towards the objects of fear is to treat them as you ought. His quantitative doctrine will not carry him through; he has to resort to the *moral* idea which he postulates in fact, but neglects in theory. 'The conception of the Right,' says Sir Alexander Grant, 'is deeper than that of the beautiful and the good. It springs perhaps from a Semitic source, and with its cognate conceptions of Duty and Obligation, it predominates over the ethical systems of modern times, which are thus strongly distinguished from a Greek system of the fourth century B.C.' 'The most striking ethical term of modern days is the term "Conscience." Aristotle had no one word to express what we mean by "Conscience"; his moral psychology had not advanced so far as this.' 'The ethics of modern Europe are far more psychological than those of Aristotle[3];' whose 'ethical system depends on certain *à priori* conceptions,—end, form, and actuality.' These ideas, by which human life is explained, are no mere results of an induction, no last development of

[1] Nicom. Eth. III. vii. 4, 5. [2] Ibid. II. vi. 15.
[3] The Ethics of Aristotle, Vol. I. pp. 378, 379.

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experience; rather they come in from above, and for the first time give some meaning to experience[1].

That Aristotle's 'ideas by which human life is explained' 'come in from above,'—in other words, that he descends upon his ethics from his metaphysics, is so obvious from the general construction of his philosophy, that I can find only one weak joint at which a doubt or denial can insinuate itself. He treats philosophy under the two aspects of 'theoretical' and 'practical[2]' (to omit the ποιητικὴ as here irrelevant); and if with him this antithesis denoted a partition of intellectual function as complete as Kant's distinction between *reine* and *praktische Vernunft* becomes in its working-out, the passage would be cut off from the one to the other, and the two provinces, though treated by the same person, might be regarded as independent of each other, and be credited with separate methods. But no such breach of continuity can be charged upon Aristotle. His 'practical insight' is other than the 'theoretical,' only by including, along with its apprehension of necessary truth in the essence of the object, an estimate of the modifying conditions imported from the scene around: it is a knowledge of the *must be*, qualified by a judgment of the *may be*[3]. In this mixed intelligence there is room for every gradation of ἀκρίβεια, as the simple relations of thought are exchanged for the complex of phenomena; Arithmetic, with its intuitive certainty, standing at one end; and Ethics, with its maximum of variables, at the other[4]. Whatever exactitude and security of knowledge belonged to any stage of the movement through this indivisible empire of truth

[1] The Ethics of Aristotle, Vol. I. p. 395. [2] Nic. Eth. VI. xi. 3, 4.

[3] Nic. Eth. I. iii. 1–4; VI. Met. α. 3. 995 a, Bonitz, p. 38, ll. 15–20.

[4] Met. M. iii. 1078 a, Bonitz, p. 240, ll. 9–11. Cf. Γ. v. 1010 a, Bonitz, p. 74.

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were brought from its uppermost extremity, the 'first philosophy,' discussed in his 'Metaphysics.' Thence come the primary principles, which, in their application to natural phenomena, give rise to 'Physics,' or the 'second philosophy,' characterized by the pervading antithesis of Matter and Form, and, through the ascendency of the latter, supplied with the gradations of organic life. To understand these is to master the nature of 'Soul,' as the constitutive 'Form' of animal existence[1]. To this investigation, which he placed in the highest rank of accuracy and interest[2], Aristotle devoted one of the most instructive of his treatises. Passing at its crowning level into the human nature, he there finds the ψυχή blended with pre-existent νοῦς, partly receptive, as affected by the cognisable real, partly causative, either as simply active for an end, or as creative of some external product. Under both these forms of energy the mind is immortal; the first expressing itself in *character*, and supplying the material of *Ethics;* the second, in *Art*, and presenting the æsthetic laws. Ethics, therefore, so far as they report the self-conscious inner life, and are not a mere critique of external facts, are no inductive record of a part of nature, but the autobiography of a supernatural principle, introduced from the divine and ontologic sphere[3]. A philosopher who makes his approach to the doctrine of morals by a series of closely-linked movements from a metaphysic station far out of its range, and who, on entering its interior, is so possessed by what he brings as to miss the new significance of its characteristic terms, presents, in his construction of theory, precisely the feature which I professed to mark by the word 'Unpsychological.'

[1] Οἷον ἀρχὴ τῶν ζῴων, De Anima, I. i. [2] De Anima, I. i.

[3] λείπεται δὲ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θύραθεν ἐπεισιέναι καὶ θεῖον εἶναι μόνον. De Gen. Animal. II. 3. Cf. Met. Λ. 7. 1072 b, Bonitz, p. 227, ll. 18–23.

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In the development of systems dominated by metaphysical conceptions, there is ample room both for subsidiary inductions and for mental analysis. Spinoza's great work abounds in anticipations of the subtle and elaborate psychology of recent times: yet no one on that account construes his theory apart from its *à priori* order and range. The case of Plato and Aristotle is similar, as is evident from the fact that every competent expositor of their philosophy finds it necessary to begin with their metaphysics, and proceed to their physics, before attempting to present their ethical doctrine. The method simply conforms to the Greek assumption, that while it might be a necessity with the beginner to feel his way upwards from sense to thought by the steps of the *πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, it was the function of the theoretic teacher to transport us to the opposite extremity, and tell the story downwards along the path of the *πρότερον τῇ φύσει*. Who would ever think of throwing into such a form an account of a modern moralist, really psychological, as Hobbes or Butler, Stewart or Sidgwick?

To mark a secondary division of ethical theories, according as the line of self-consciousness on which they move is out of or into the moral centre, I have had recourse to the antithesis *Idio-* and *Hetero-psychological*. I share the repugnance which is naturally felt to the use of such unsanctioned compounds; and have nothing to say for this pair except that they effect a classification which no other phrase at my command renders so distinct. Why will not 'independent and derivative' serve your purpose? I am asked. Because they do not express (what alone I want) *a subdivision of the psychological*, but take into their grouping the unpsychological as well: the Ethics that own a metaphysical or physical parentage are no less 'derivative' than

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those which proclaim themselves the quest of happiness or the sense of beauty in disguise. More serious is an objection brought against not the mere selection of the phrase, but the adoption of the division itself which it expresses, viz. that it is 'a question-begging division.' *What* question it begs, or in any way touches, I am at a loss to conceive. It simply marks an undeniable difference among facts; viz. that of ethical theories appealing to inward experience there are some that start from postulates of the moral consciousness, as they are, and work with them alone; while others go further afield, and trace the whole contents and growth of these in *unmoral* sources. Is it a 'question' whether these two types of theory exist? and if not, is it not well that each should have its name? and that in either case, the name should connote the specialty which distinguishes it from the other?

It has been remarked with regret that the constructive part of these volumes is left in a precarious position, because hinging on the alternative of a disjunctive proposition, 'Either Freewill is a fact, or the sense of Obligation an illusion;' and that confidence in the deliverances of the moral consciousness is left in suspense, for want of a prior treatment of the question of Determinism. With a slight reservation (which I will immediately mention), I acknowledge the justice of the remark, if applied to the book on the assumption of its completeness. But as its plan was formed with a sequel in view, to carry over its conclusions into the province of Religion, I had to consider in which section of the whole the required discussion would be most in place. If the problem of Freewill had been purely psychological, I should have admitted it into the present treatise, with the character of which its entire contents

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would have been in keeping. But since it is *ontological* as well, and involves reasonings respecting cosmical causation, time and space, necessity and possibility, the prescience and justice of God, I judged that its pleadings could not be fairly heard and weighed, till these ulterior topics had been set in order. Meanwhile, the simple exposition of the inward experiences which make up the story of conscience and the drama of moral passion and heroism, and the bare analysis of the meaning of our moral terms, go far, as it seems to me, towards settling the balance of psychological testimony; so as to leave the question, till its re-hearing, in a state of not very uneasy rest.

In the present humour of the schools, when the idea of personality,—the noblest gain of Christian thought,—has been melted down again into its ancient and oriental fluidity, I could not expect much assent to a doctrine of *moral authority* which resolved it into a personal relation. To relieve it, however, of any superfluous scruple, I will guard it by one comment. The form of Moral nature which it treats as common to the Divine and the human mind, the communicated ground of kindred between them, is that of a preferential order among the motive affections; while in us as finite and dependent beings there is, super-induced upon this, a sense of Obligation and overshadowing Authority, assuring us that the higher claim is not simply in us, but over us. This sentiment of *Duty* is not the pure essence of the moral idea itself, but the consciousness of its administration to us from the Supreme Source. It thus appeals to us, not merely as a subjective suggestion, but with the solemn persuasion belonging to any revelation of Right from a higher personality. Take away its Divine source and partner, and its presence as a mere incident of

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our finite feeling invests it with no authority, but leaves it with us as a blind phenomenal necessity. Does the relation, thus conceived as transcendent, too much separate myself as a moral being, and the Divine legislative Self? and must I unify them so far as to believe the transaction complete in my own consciousness, and the law of preference *self-imposed?* Self-*recognised*, adopted in my affections as a reproduction from the Infinite, and so urged by me upon my own will with uttermost consent, I admit it to be; but in thus bringing its own warrant into my nature, it reveals its objective eternity and its communication from the Infinite. What then is that objective infinitude or legislative Self to which I thus respond? In being more than my subjectivity, is it simply the indefinite repetition of other finite subjectivities, especially the aggregate of my human fellows, in each of whom there is provision for the same experience? If only in them does there occur any spiritual apprehension of the Right like my own, its law may be called universal, but certainly not 'Divine' or 'God-given,' unless the sacred name is reduced to mean the totality of self-conscious mortals. A Law neither thought nor felt but by creatures limited as myself and imposed merely by their multitudinous consensus, is commended to me by no higher claim than the cogency of a successful vote, and makes vain pretensions to any Holy source. It is but the will of such a γηγενὴς γίγας as towers above the landscape in the frontispiece of Hobbes's Leviathan, clad apparently in fish-skin armour, every one of whose countless scales proves, when magnified, to be a puny man. If the awe with which I bow before the moral law is the worship of such a God, what defence have I against the charge of abject idolatry? Moreover, if we have *here* found the objective legislative Self,

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and are at the seat of the *animus imponentis*, is it not *more* separated from my individual moral self-consciousness than would be an infinite Mind setting up in me a finite moral communion with his own? A theorist who is bent upon a unification of personalities will surely find it easier to establish a common margin between each finite spirit and the infinite 'Father of Spirits,' than to erase the boundaries which distinguish himself from his fellows. A legislative function vested in the general assembly of dead and unborn men together with the miscellany of living populations is immeasurably more cut off from my subjective life than the righteous Will of the Soul of souls that lives in me to foster there the rudiments of his own perfection. On the whole, whatever difficulties may attach to the religious interpretation of the consciousness of Duty appear to me to be enormously increased upon the purely humanistic view, and to be removable only at the cost of the consciousness itself upon which they attend.

Of the corrections in the text of the present edition the most signal has been occasioned by an objection, on the part of Mr. Herbert Spencer, to the distinction which I have drawn between his enunciation of the law of evolution and Mr. Darwin's. Lest, in attempting a revised representation of his view I should again fail, I have thought it most just to him to let the correspondence between us on the subject speak for itself; and, with his permission, it appears in the Appendix. The re-statement which it contains should be read in connection with the corresponding pages of the Data of Ethics; to which it supplies an important commentary.

LONDON,
January 1, 1886.

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INTRODUCTION.

I. Ethical Facts. Modes of Interpreting them.

Ethics may be briefly defined as the doctrine of human character. They assume as their basis the fact, that men are prone to criticise themselves and others, and cannot help admiring in various degrees some expressions of affection and will, and condemning others. This tendency displays itself actively in every aspect of life; giving pungency to the gossip of a village, the chief interest to biography and fiction, the needful authority to law, and the highest power to religion. All these take their origin from the consciousness of a better and a worse in human beings and affairs; and aspire, with more or less distinctness, to realise the good and exclude the ill. But while they all join in the confession that there is an interval between life as it is and life as it ought to be, they investigate no standard, they seek no ground for their own feeling; but are content with reporting the estimates that rise spontaneously in the mind; with animadverting on particular traits, and proclaiming actual admirations. These current judgments constitute a body of *ethical facts*; and it is the aim of ethical *science* to strip from them their accidental, impulsive, unreflecting character; to trace them to their ultimate seat in the constitution of our nature and our world; and to exhibit, not as a concrete picture, but in its universal essence, the ideal of individual and social perfection. To interpret, to vindicate, and systematise the moral sentiments, constitutes the business of this department of thought.

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In dealing with its problems, it is impossible to remain within the limits of mere self-interrogation. The sentiments which we propose to investigate have regard to the character and actions of mankind; the fitness of which must depend not simply on the internal springs whence they issue, but also on external adaptation to the sphere of their display. The feeling suitable to a certain imaginary universe may be quite out of place in this; and a purely speculative doctrine of Ethics, were such a product possible, might involve us in judgments wholly false respecting actual persons and communities. The conditions by which man is surrounded and hemmed in, by determining his opportunities, must affect his duties; and springs of conduct which intrinsically would attract the highest admiration may forfeit our approval, should the world open to them no range of possible operation. As, in the case of the individual, the right course is marked out not simply by the sentiments of his nature, but in part by the specialties of his lot; and, in the case of a nation, the shape of its best aims must be given by its historical place as well as its inner genius; so, for humanity at large, we cannot fix the form of perfect character, without reference to its position in the whole system of things, to the possibilities open to its enterprise, and the enduring objects existing for its affection. Hence it is inevitable that ethics should run out beyond the circle of mere introspection, in order to determine the objects in whose presence man continually stands, the relations he bears to them, and the dealings he can have with them.

What these objects are that constitute the scene around him, may be expressed in two words,—Nature and God;—understanding by the former the totality of perceptible phenomena; and by the latter, the eternal ground and cause whose essence they express. These two are the companions that no one can ever quit, change as he may his place, his age, his society: they fill the very path of time on which he travels, and the fields of space into which

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he looks; and the questions what they are, and what exactly they have to do with him, cannot but affect the decision of what he ought to be. Whether you will first address yourselves to *them*, or will rather make your commencement with *him*, may seem a matter of small moment, inasmuch as all three must be relatively surveyed; but in fact it makes the greatest difference,—the whole difference between the most opposite schools of opinion, between an objective and a subjective genesis of doctrine, between ancient and modern philosophy. If you give priority to the study of nature and God, and resort to them as your nearest given objects, you are certain to regard them as the better known, and to carry the conceptions you gain about them into the remaining field as your interpreters and guides: you will explain the human mind by their analogy, and expect in it a mere extension of their being. If, on the other hand, you permit the human mind to take the lead of these objects in your enquiry, the order of inference will naturally be reversed; and with the feeling that it is the better known, you will rather believe what the soul says of them, than what they have to say about the soul. In both instances, no doubt, they stand related to man as macrocosm to microcosm; and we may be asked, 'what matters it whether we think of man as a finite epitome of the universe, or of the universe as the infinite counterpart of man?' In the last resort, the difference, I believe, will be found to consist in this; that when self-consciousness is resorted to as the primary oracle, an assurance is obtained and is carried out into the scheme of things, of a free preferential power; but when the external whole is the first interrogated, it affords no means of detecting such a power, but, exhibiting to the eye of observation a course of necessary evolution, tempts our thought to force the same type of development upon the human soul. In the one case we obtain a volitional theory of nature; in the other, a naturalistic theory of volition; and on the resulting schemes of morals the great difference

First distinction of method.

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is impressed, that according to the respective modes of procedure, the doctrine of proper responsibility is admitted or denied. Thus then we obtain our first distinction of method, deducing it simply from the opposite lines of direction which the order of investigation may take. Ethics may pursue their course and construct their body of doctrine either from the moral sentiments outwards into the system of the world; or from the system of the world inwards to the moral sentiments. The former method may be called the *Psychologic;* the latter we will for the present oppose to it by the mere negative designation of the *Unpsychologic.*

So far the line of demarcation is obvious enough; plain as the contrast between *within* and *without;* and thoroughly familiarised to us by the current language and prevailing controversies in philosophy during the last century. The whole debate of our modern schools turns upon the well-worn antithesis of subject and object, and seeks, in the laws of our knowledge, to discriminate the legislative work of external nature and of the mind, and assign the due validity to each. There is no difficulty therefore in seizing what is meant by a psychologic process. It is otherwise when we advance a step further, and mark out the definite directions which the unpsychologic method may take; for we are immediately thrown upon a distinction, found indeed at the very roots of our thought, and pervading the whole of the ancient philosophy, but so little familiar to our ordinary habits of reflection, and so ill provided with fitting expression in our language, that it is not easy to render it exoterically clear. It has been already hinted at in our division of the objective world into the two elements *Nature* and *God;* only that these names, though indicating the proper *realms* on which attention should fix, fail to suggest the particular characteristics which bring them into contrast; and they are liable, with their modern significance, to put us on a false intellectual scent. Laying aside for the moment the conception of nature as a creation at a certain date, and of God as its personal author existing before and

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without it, and looking forth afresh through the young eye of heathen wonder, we find that our thought seizes, with instinctive persuasion, on two opposite aspects of existence, —that which *appears* and that which *is*,—the transient phenomenon and the abiding ground,—the moving succession of actual change and the still potencies and permanent entities from whose depths they come. No one can help thinking of something behind what he sees and hears and feels; and if he denies it in the interests of a favourite theory, the very language in which he couches his denial confutes him; for the fundamental forms of grammatical construction embody the conceptions of substance and of power which he would explain away. The colour, the form, the sound which he perceives; the joy, the hope, the admiration which he experiences; these he cannot imagine to float as unattached qualities,—homeless attributes of nothing, —successions with vacuity at the core; he is obliged to refer them to a *body* which, apart from these effects, he does not perceive, or a *mind*, of which, after reckoning its transitory states, he has no separate consciousness. He cannot use the first personal pronoun of himself without claiming an existence other than that of his own evanescent feelings: for in doing so he certainly means, what he directly says, not that he *is*, but that he *has* the several thoughts and emotions that make the thread of his experience. Whether this meaning that he has is *true or false*, whether there is anything corresponding to it *in naturâ rerum* or it be a 'fiction of the mind,' is a question which we need not touch: be it given by a faculty or entailed by an incapacity, certain it is that this notion of a permanent reality as the supporting centre of all transient appearance, is inseparable from the very action of the intellect. A universe of mere 'successions and coexistences' of change is wholly unpresentable in thought, and could not be intelligibly spoken of, were it not helped out by the complemental act of the mind itself restoring in fact what is suppressed in phrase. Phenomena alone, supported by no nucleus of the real, would be

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but as flapping drapery hanging upon no solid form, but folded round the empty outline of a ghost.

And this distinction forces itself upon us in other shapes. As Attribute flings us back on Substance, so does the *accidental* upon the *essential*; and in both cases we are landed on the conception of something enduring, central, regulative, reposing in the midst of the momentary whirl of appearances. It is impossible not to recognise in each separate *kind* of being, especially in the species of the organised world, a distinct expression of character, every departure from which, though found in ever so many actual individuals, is condemned as distortion or defect. Nor can we help attributing *unity* to this generic character, and feeling it to be a *single type*, though it has never insulated itself before our eye, or become detached from its entanglement with mixed and multifarious specimens. And if you insist that it is a mere product of abstraction,—the *average* impression collected from the sum of all our observations,—the explanation is liable to this embarrassing objection; that our ideal of any species (say, of man), far from coinciding with the average of examples, is realised in the fewest or in none; and you feel that, tried by the inner meaning or project of each nature, the whole circle of your experience has brought you only poor attempts and approximations. If so, however, it is difficult to escape the acknowledgment that the type is a permanent standard, a pre-existent and imperishable idea, towards which, as to a model conception, all single births imperfectly strive: and, far from assenting to the dictum that in truth there are nothing but individuals and only in human fancy are there classes, we are brought to conceive inversely of the procedure of nature, as a descent from the generic thought as prior, into individualisation as posterior. He who follows this course, and represents to himself the primary ideal bursting into the actual, the unspoiled unity breaking into the disappointing multiplicity, naturally ascribes to the earliest and genetic type a more positive as well as a higher *reality* than belongs to the individuals

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embodying it. If he be a Platonist, he calls it an εἶδος: if an Aristotelian, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι: if a Scholastic, a Universal: but in any case, he regards it as nearer the fountain of existence than anything which merely passes across the stage,—and indeed as the *essence* which, occupying this and that particular being, gives it what reality it has.

It is unnecessary to follow out into further applications this mode of contemplating the objects of human ken. The opposites which it discovers,—substance and attribute,—unity and plurality,—are all gathered up into one comprehensive antithesis, by which the universe is distributed into ὄντα and γιγνόμενα[1],—what always *is* and what for a while *appears*. The history of nature thus comes to be conceived of in a manner very different from ours: a certain stock of eternals transmigrates through various forms, which must therefore be deemed the evanescent embodiment of divine realities: no augmentation, no diminution of the totality of being is possible; it can but pass into the visible field and lapse into latency again. Phenomena are the veil that hides yet hints the essential ideal, which is also the truest real, world; and when *that* has been read off, we have reached the ultimatum of knowledge, the evolving thought, to commune with which is to be admitted among the immortal gods.

But how gain access to that higher realm? or have we access to it at all? This was the grand controversy of the Greek schools: but, however variously it was resolved, one common principle pervades the answers. With all their mutual contradictions, they invariably assume that, in order to know a thing, you must have a share of its nature in yourself, and that without such common element to mediate between it and you, the reciprocal dissimilarity keeps you hopelessly estranged. According to this assumption, if man is to know the universe spread around him, he must be similarly composed; its two factors must extend to him, and give him a double sympathy, answering face to face, and exchanging

[1] See Plato, Timæus, 28 A.

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looks of recognition, now with the inner ground, now with the outer appearance, of the world. He was accordingly conceived of as actually the compendium, as he was the finished product, of the universe; whose *types of thought*, simply *existing* in other natures, but rising into consciousness in him, constitute his share of *Reason*; and whose *material phenomena*, provoking responsive movements in his corporeal organism, pass into the susceptibility of *Sense*. As the universe, acting downwards, divaricates into these two endowments in him, so does each, in its instinctive return upward, find its own proper parent: Sense apprehending the world of phenomena; Reason, the store of essential realities: the one conversing with the relative and transitory; the other, with the absolute and eternal. The former, if it realises its highest aim, terminates in *physical* knowledge; the latter, in *metaphysical*. For this, be it observed, is the proper meaning of these two words: physics, the doctrine of things so far as they enter and quit our field of perception; metaphysics, the doctrine of things so far as they are permanent entities, and, withholding themselves from Sense, are objects of Reason alone.

Now between these two doctrines there was no less fierce a controversy in ancient than in modern times; but with this difference: that the contest was conducted *then* upon the field of nature and the universe, *now* upon the enclosure of the human faculties. The primary question then was, Is there anything but phenomena to be known? but now it is, Are *we competent* to know anything but phenomena? Those who maintained the negative asserted, in old times, that the whole system of things was resolvable into mere currents of incessant change, and were called the *flowing* philosophers: but in our day, they prefer the statement, that the mind's whole life is a tissue of disguised sensations, and receive the name of the *Sensational* school. The opposite party in Elea (Lower Italy) shaped their position thus,—that change and motion, far from being all in all, were impossible, and the totality of being was One, immutable and absolute: but

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with us they rather say, that *Reason ought to be believed*, when constraining us to think as if there were fundamental existences,—e. g. Soul and God,—as the ground of every change. This distinction of philosophical method is of the utmost importance for the correct apprehension of the Greek schools. They were all essentially unpsychological and objective; reasoning downwards from the data of the universe, whether real or phenomenal, into the quæsita of our faculties, whether of intellect or sense: whereas we rather take the inverse direction, and find in the universe the real or the phenomenal, according as we take on trust the assumptions of thought or the impressions of sense. Hence it is that, although the same schemes of doctrine have reappeared among us that gave distinction to the names of Parmenides and Zeno, Protagoras and Epicurus, yet little or no use can be made by the moderns of the reasoning of their Hellenic prototypes; the logical locomotion is in the opposite direction; and though there is the same ferry to cross, the boat is moored on the wrong side for us, and another must be taken. How little conviction, for instance, is now produced by the Platonic arguments for the immortality of the soul! so that precisely the readers in deepest sympathy with the author's feeling and conclusion are the first to lament the hazardous dependence of a sublime moral truth on the precarious assumptions of a metaphysical realism. And how foreign to the genius of Bentham and Mill are the maxims and reasoning of Heracleitus, to prove that motion and semblance, without rest and substance, constitute the universe! And if forced to acknowledge the essential identity of their conclusions with his, how ready would they be with condescending apologies for the old Greek's perverseness in making his logic stand upon its head! In a word, the controversy between the pretensions of change and the unchanging is common to ancient and modern times; but in the former the stress of the battle was thrown upon the macrocosm, and fought out between the real and phenomenal, and then the victory was pushed home

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into human nature; while in the latter, the tug of war is in the microcosm, between the maxims of reason and of sense; and this outpost being carried, the field of the great universe is won.

Now suppose a Greek Realist to bring his doctrine down into human life, and interpret by it the varieties of sentiment and character. He sees in the soul the co-presence of what already he has discriminated everywhere else, only now wakened into self-consciousness. Whatever belongs to the senses, the pleasures and pains of their experience, the passions and desires which impel to their exercise, the principles of conduct which consult for their gratification,—in short, the whole apparatus of our sentient nature that adapts us to the world of phenomena,—he will regard as *not fundamental*, but subsidiary and evanescent, not the positive essence of our life, but the mere negative condition for the concrete expression of what is behind. Whatever on the other hand is constant through all sentient mutations, the ideas that abide with us and recur, while objects and phenomena pass by and perish,—of the true, the beautiful, the good,—with the aspirations that seek and the faculties that seize them,—in short, the whole essence of our rational nature that is in communion with the world of eternal things,—he will recognise as the very groundwork of our being, the endless warp of divine reality, coiled, as it passes, upon our loom, and taking only an iridescent pattern from the woof of flying phenomena. When he encounters therefore men whose tastes are selfish and worldly, whose aims are satisfied with mere ease or reputation, whose rules of conduct are only a device of longer or shorter prudence for winning these ends, he will assuredly look down upon them as falling infinitely short of the proper standard for a man; and will contrast with them the nobler few who, enamoured of truth and goodness, chase them at all costs wherever they appear. These last, he will say, show the divine nature of the soul, and vindicate its real essence amid the flood of natural change by which the majority are

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overwhelmed. You will probably feel that his moral criticism is essentially just; that in distinguishing between the good and the evil, he separates the right things; and that if he had the shaping of the world, it would be less unlike a kingdom of heaven. But though he pitches upon the right sort of men to be called *good men*, what is it that constitutes them good in his eyes?—that, by a happy infection or infusion, more of the essence of the universe has got into them than into others; that the magnetic wires from the fount of real ideas pass the currents of the fair and good with peculiar intensity through them, and evolve within them the responsive and miniature god. What is praised in them is thus only a margin or local extension of the outer ground of the universe; is the very same thing in another place; and in no other sense belongs to them than that they are the theatre of its manifestation: rather do they belong to it as its creature and medium of exercise. The real, appearing in their consciousness, becomes ideal, the divine becomes human, in them; and, apart from this development in concurrence with their personality and on the scene of their physical existence, there is nothing in them to extol. The sentiment therefore directed towards them is no other than that which may be felt towards a fine form or a noble face; or towards the products of Art and Science; or towards the several types of intellectual genius. All these belong, in this theory, to one and the same category; they are the essential principles, the eternal life, the formative thoughts of the universe, cropping up into manifestation on the human stage; and all are to be welcomed with the same kind of admiration. This complete merging of all moral approbation in the love of beauty and truth, is especially visible in the system of Plato; and has its distinctest expression in his Socratic doctrine, that virtue is an ἐπιστήμη that may be taught. It is evident that no distinction is drawn, in such a scheme, between natural and moral evil: no room is left for *guilt*, as opposed to *ignorance*; or for *retribution*, as different from *discipline*. Yet it is remarkable

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that Plato could not hold himself exclusively to this point of view: the instincts of his nature were too much for the restraints of a philosophy, comprehensive indeed, but still short of the compass of his mind; and when, as at the close of his Republic, his dialectic, unequal to the inner pressure of his moral inspiration, bursts its formal shell, and takes flight upon the air of myth, he proclaims penalties to sin quite too solemn, were it but a mental ugliness, and even, in cases of extremest guilt, announces them as eternal. This, however, is little else than the revolt of his inmost moral sentiment against the checks of his philosophy; and that his philosophy necessitated the revolt, and found no place for feelings that insisted on expression, enables us to mark the great defect of the whole method. The *metaphysic* doctrine of Ethics, which regards human virtue, in conjunction with human beauty and human science, as a mere community of essence, transmuted into conscious sympathy, with the realities of the universe, treats man as an irresponsible development, and fails to vindicate the indestructible sentiments which we entertain towards moral as distinguished from natural ill. Morals, Æsthetics, and Philosophy fuse themselves, in this scheme, into one; and are but the blossoming in the consciousness of man of the real root of the eternal universe.

To the *metaphysic* doctrine of Ethics stands opposed (still within the unpsychological circle) the *physical;* which descends into human life from the *phenomenal* instead of the *real* side of the world. Resolving every thing into phenomena, the disciple of this school recognises in man no reliable functions except those which stand in relation to phenomena; none, therefore, beyond the range of the senses themselves and their elaborated or disguised impressions. As in the former system the leading idea was that of *Permanence*, and the ethical aim was to keep the mind in sympathy and communion with the abiding ground of things; so, in this, the leading idea is that of *Change*, and the great end is to live in adaptation to the *Laws of Change*.

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Fixed standard of good amid the flow of events, *reality* behind the semblances of the world, there is none; and to maintain in one's self a persistency to which nothing outward corresponds, is a mark, not of wisdom, but of stubbornness. Pliant accommodation of the mind to the shifting phases of the scene in which it is placed, free surrender to nature's facts, whatever they be, is the only virtue. It is impossible to escape from the purely relative existence in which we find ourselves; to gain any test of truth, except what *seems* to be true; of good, except what *seems* to be good: and if, in different persons, or in different moods of the same, this seeming should not be the same, the true and good must be held to have altered too. It follows that there is no knowledge which is more than opinion; and only a sentient test of beauty or virtue. All this would hold, even if man were his own master, and *could* defy his relations to the world of phenomena. But he is himself nothing but a product of that world, and throughout his being only *one of its phenomena;* and, whether he owns it or not, he is as absolute subject of its laws, which are only physical laws, as his dog or his flower-garden. He himself, what is he? simply a succession of feelings and thoughts,—a thread of temporary consciousness spun off from the wheel of a physiologic Fate; and not one component element in the series of his life can come without its cause, or would come the same if the cause were different. Act from volition, volition from desire, desire from idea, idea from sensation, sensation from vital connection with the physical world,—form the links by which man is chained to the legislation of material Nature. The effect which this manner of thinking must have on the configuration of ethical doctrine will be obvious at once; and will in part agree with the results of the metaphysic scheme. There is the same exclusion of any proper notion of *responsibility:* the same reduction of all *moral evil* to the category of *natural evil;* only that in the metaphysic doctrine it comes rather under the head of ugliness and unreason, and is looked on

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with disgust, while in the physical it is more analogous to disease and suffering, and is contemplated with pity: but in neither is there room for regarding it with *disapproval* as a sin. The mode in which man is hung on to the outer universe, to the exclusion of his original or personal causation, is somewhat different in the two systems. For the usual ethical conception of freedom, viz. a true preferential power, capable of determining the previously indeterminate, the metaphysic doctrine substitutes the notion of mere *spontaneity*, or undisturbed development from within, by a force wholly indigenous to the being himself: while the physical doctrine subjugates him to an *external necessity*, referring his seeming activity back into prior conditions not inherent, and explaining them away from efficient causes into natural effects. It may also be remarked, as a consequence or rather perhaps only another phase of this distinction, that the idea of *Personality* is differently conceived in the two schools; being identified with the *active power* of rational mind in the one case; with the passive continuity of unbroken consciousness in the other. In the metaphysic scheme, the spontaneous energy of thought evolving itself in products, constitutes a *person;* in the physical, the mere having impressions, or being the theatre of feelings, joined with the power of giving them a collective name, constitutes a person. The former necessarily regards the human person as subordinate or miniature to the divine, the counterpart and symbol of its great prototype; and though the notion of personality may be altogether an inadequate one, it is not less elevated and full in relation to the Mind of the universe than in relation to our own. But the latter theory, when fairly carried out, as it is in our days, makes man the *first* person that has existed, so far as we know: it is not that an eternal divine Reason has come down and appeared on the scale of his small life; but that phenomenal laws and blind currents of force have so converged as to warm and colour the clay of which he comes, and set up the surprise of a self-conscious being. Thus between the systems

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there is all the difference of the higher embracing and supporting the lower, or the lower creating the higher.

Thus then we obtain the leading division of ethical systems, by referring to the generating idea or method out of which they spring. If the primary assumptions are taken from within, and you proceed by light of self-knowledge to interpret what is objective, you have a psychological system of Ethics. Invert the procedure, and you have an unpsychological system. This may be of two kinds, according as you begin with assuming real, eternal, intellectual entities, and thence descend into the human world; or only phenomena and their laws. If the former, you have a metaphysical; if the latter, a physical system, of Morals.

II. Historical Instances; and Subdivisions.

Before following out our first distribution of ethical theories into further divisions, we may advantageously notice one or two points of interest in regard to their ascendency in different periods of history. It is curious that psychological ethics are *altogether peculiar to Christendom*. Of the various anterior doctrines, much as they concerned themselves with the true ideal of conduct and character, there is not one which seeks its first principles in human consciousness, and endeavours thence to determine the moral position of man in the universe. The order of investigation is always the reverse; fetching its primary truths from the objective sphere, and by their help lighting its way through the labyrinth of inner thought and experience. It is not that psychological observation and reflection are absent from the ancient philosophy, or fail to occupy an important place in it: the writings of Plato and Aristotle abound not only in judgments on life as seen from the outside, but in the results of a profound self-knowledge; while the dæmon of Socrates, the Stoic 'man within the breast,' the Epicurean resolution of all human phenomena into sensation, obviously imply an attention, more or less deliberate, to the processes of the self-conscious

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mind. But the store of mental and moral facts, whatever it might be, was to them the fruit, and not the seed, of their system of belief:—a deducible from their prior theory of the universe, which it confirmed by showing how the actual came out correctly from the hypothesis. The genius of the Greeks, notwithstanding our *logical* obligations to them, was essentially *objective;* not only *perceptive* in the highest degree, in relation to the external world, but investing with form and substance the very data of thought itself: nor could they readily deal with anything as an inner fact, till they had had their look at it as an hypostatised reality beyond their own centre. Hence their systems are all either metaphysical or physical in their bases; and their ethical element is in no case intelligible, till it is studied as a sequel to this earlier portion of the scheme. In short, wherever the chief *wonder* is felt to reside, there will philosophy be sure to begin; and the speculative eye of the Athenians, unlike that of their own bird of wisdom, was fond of light and space, and first felt the mystery of the universe on straining further into them than it could see. The earliest glimpse of ethical speculation came in therefore to supplement their wide sweep over the curve of Nature; and the individual mind, though included in its compass, was not its regulative centre, but only one of the loci of its countless ordinates.

In the Christian religion, on the other hand, the interest, the mystery of the world were concentrated *in human nature.* All the relations between it and God became *immediate and direct,* not incident to it merely as part of the universal organism, but due to its own special state and essence; so completely, that they would remain the same were the visible frame of things to vanish and leave us alone in the infinite Presence. The sense of *Sin,*—a sentiment that left no trace in Athens,—involves a consciousness of personal alienation from the supreme Goodness: the aspiration after *holiness* directs itself to a union of affection and will with the source of all Perfection: the agency for transferring men from their old estrangement to new reconciliation was a

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Person in whom the divine and human historically blended; and the sanctifying spirit by which they are sustained at the height of their purer life is a living link of communion between their minds and the Soul of souls. This was the circle of ideas in which Christian sentiment revolved:—the fatal separation of two spiritual natures, and then their permanent reunion by their meeting once on the stage of a single personality; and this circle was complete without the least reference to the material universe, in which the Greek sought for the divine ground of all. Nature, which was a principal before, sank into the accidental and the neutral, —the mere scene on which the great drama of real being was performed, and flung its lights and shades. Connected with this transference of divine manifestation from the universe to man, is another feature of Christianity; that it resolves the whole administration of the world into a moral idea, and makes the state of human character the determining condition of all the good and ill that can be hoped or feared. The consequence of this mode of thought inevitably was, that the scene of divine audience was changed: Wonder, instead of roaming comprehensively abroad, retired intensely within; moral psychology penetrated to its deep foundations; and subjective maxims became regulative of objective theory. The whole complexion of thought and language on ethical subjects alters on crossing the line from heathendom to Christendom; and even where the Pagan philosopher draws more truly and more severely the outer boundaries of right and wrong, the Christian disciple will show a deeper apprehension of the inner quality and colouring of both. How it was that the new habits of self-knowledge ripened into nó systematic Ethics, it would be foreign to my purpose to discuss: I will mention but one disturbing cause, which, from its vast and protracted operation, is too remarkable to be overlooked. The Augustinian theology is founded upon a sense of sin so passionate and absolute as to plunge the conscience into unrelieved shadows. It pledges itself to find traces everywhere of the lost condition of humanity, in

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virtue of which there is no longer any freedom for good, and a hopeless taint is mingled with the very springs of our activity. This doctrine is evidently the utterance of a deep but despairing moral aspiration: it estimates with such stern purity the demands of the divine holiness upon us, that only the first man, fresh with unspoiled powers, was capable of fulfilling them; and since he was false, the sole opportunity of voluntary holiness has been thrown away, and we must live in helpless knowledge of obligations which we cannot discharge. Hence there has never been more than one solitary hour of real probation for the human race: during that hour there was a positive trust committed to a capable will, and the young world was under genuine moral administration; but, ever since, evil only has been possible to human volition, and good can pass no further than our dreams. It follows that, as the human game is already lost, we no longer live a probationary life, and can have no doctrine of applied Ethics which shall have the slightest religious value: the moralities, considered as divine, are obsolete as Eden; and human nature, as it is, can produce no voluntary acts that are not relatively neutral, because uniformly offensive, to the sentiment of God. Its restoration must proceed from sources extraneous to the will; and unless snatched away in some fiery chariot of grace, it must gaze in vain upon the heaven that spreads its awful beauty above the earth. Thus a doctrine which begins with the highest proclamation of the divine moral law, ends with practically superseding it. The history of the universe opens with an act of probation and closes with one of retribution: but through every intervening moment is destitute of moral conditions; and man, the central figure of the whole,—though a stately actor at the first, and an infinite recipient or victim at the last,—so falls through in the meanwhile between the powers that tempt and those that save him, that as an ethical agent he sinks into nonentity, and becomes the mere prize contended for by the spirits of darkness and of light. In this system, the human personality, by the very intensity with which it burns

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at its own focus, consumes itself away; and the very attempt to idealise the severity and sanctity of divine law does but cancel it from the actual, and banish it to the beginning and end of time. The man of to-day is no free individuality at all, but the mere meeting-point of opposite forces foreign to his will,—ruined by nature, rescued by God, —with no range of power, therefore none of responsibility between. It is as if the Augustinian system took its doctrine of nature from Protagoras and Epicurus, and its doctrine of grace from Parmenides and Plato: in the one not reaching so high a level as that of moral obligation, in the other overflying it with a dangerous transcendental wing; and combining therefore, without any mediating term, the extreme tendencies of the physical and metaphysical schools.

The consequence has been the forfeiture once more of the great advantage which Christianity, by its appeal to the moral consciousness, had promised to philosophy, and a return, under the guidance and especially in the native land of the reformation, of both the unpsychological tendencies, whose dominance in the ancient world I have described: France for the most part preferring the physical, and Germany the metaphysical, substitute for psychological ethics. With the proclamation and spread of Protestantism, the *religious* value of morals disappeared, and they were deserted by that sentiment of reverence which alone can generate a true science. They were treated by Luther himself from a merely outward point of view, as simply useful for civil peace and order, matters of social police, fitly placed under guardianship of the magistrate. Hence the *political* turn given to almost all the disquisitions on moral doctrine produced under the influence of 'the new learning'; the State assuming in them the position which in Catholic books is held by the Church, and secular regulation or human compact replacing the divine law. The psychological clue being lost, attempts were inevitable to evolve a theory of society and morals from either physical or metaphysical assumptions; and in circles remote from Church interests

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and animated by purely speculative aspirations, the opposition of these two directions became more and more marked. At the one extreme stands Hobbes, as the great representative of *physical* absolutism; at the other, Spinoza, of *metaphysical;* and if the spirit of the former, after various minor epiphanies, transmigrated into Comte, that of the latter survives in the school of Hegel; and in both we find reproduced the very controversies and characteristics which divided learned Greeks in the days of Heracleitus and Aristotle. So much is this the case that it might almost seem as if the current of Hellenic philosophy, when lost from the upper light, had taken a subterranean course below the world where Christendom has had its history, and had burst to the surface of our age again; were it not that it makes a show of taking up and carrying with it the elements of Christian truth, and perhaps does so on condition of dissolving them all away. In modern, as in ancient times, the extreme points between which philosophy has oscillated are the same: *positively* described, they are the *pantheistic* and (if I may invent a phrase) the *pamphysical* poles of doctrine; *negatively*, they are the *atheism* of Lamettrie, and what Hegel calls the *akosmism* of Spinoza. But wherever the Augustinian system has *not prevailed*, and whencesoever it has receded in favour of a milder theology, the psychological tendency has re-asserted itself; has driven back, on either side, the physical and the metaphysical domination within their proper limits; has reinstated the superseded personality of man; and re-discovered a religious significance for morals. This return to the essential foundation at once of the Christian religion and of ethical philosophy is due in this country to Bishop Butler. Unfortunately it has been but scantily imitated and accepted; and with the exception of the writers of the Scottish school and their editors, critics, and disciples in Paris, it is difficult to find any class of recent moralists who have declined to betray their science to the physiologist on the one hand, and the ontologist on the other.

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From this rapid glance it will be evident that, of each kind of system, examples might be derived from widely separated periods. Without any primary regard to the order of time, I propose to select and exhibit a well-marked specimen of each, not only of the principal theories, but of their most important subordinate varieties. Beginning with *metaphysic* schemes, we might resort for illustrative instances to the schools of Athens, Elea, or Tarentum; to the conventual class-rooms of the middle ages; or to the auditories of modern Heidelberg or Berlin. As, however, there is a genealogy in the successions of ideas not less than in the descent of race, it is desirable to ascend to the great founders of our chief dynasties of thought, wherever history has left their intellectual features still distinct; and I shall therefore in the first instance seek in Greece the incipient line of approach to theoretic Morals; and only slightly indicate its continued direction through the medieval times to our own day. Our first category, however, we must previously divide into two, and choose a representative of each member. The ground of this division a few words will exhibit.

The entire sphere of existence resolving itself before our mind into the real and the phenomenal, metaphysics, we have said, seize upon the real, and vindicate its rights against the exclusive pretensions of the phenomenal. Among those, however, who agree to the general vindication, a question arises how far precisely those rights may go,—whether to simple co-extension with the rival claims, or whether indefinitely further. One says: 'The real eternal Ground of all must be older than the transitory appearances that are born from it and perish: the infinite and universal Cause must be wider than its particular effects: the formative Thought which lies at heart as the essence of each kind must be purer than its imperfect embodiment; so that every way, in time, in scope, in quality, the divine potency whence all things come must transcend the totality of phenomena: God is greater than

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Nature; and His resources of perfection are not exhausted or fully expressed in the organism of the visible universe.' This doctrine is called, in the language of the schools, the system of *Transcendency;* and we may express its logical characteristic by saying that, while it declares God to be the essence of the universe, it refuses to convert the proposition and affirm that the essence of the universe is God. Again, and in reply, another says: 'If the ground of things is eternal, so too has its manifestation been, for there never was a time void of all phenomena; while they are transient one by one, their series has neither beginning nor end; nor can we conceive that there are outlying deserts of space where the Divine Cause exists, yet, for want of effect, is truly cause no more; and whether or not the types of actual being spread around us are imperfect, they are the most perfect that we know; nor have we any reason to suppose that their idea has existed in other time or other place or less mixed with alloy, than in the very objects themselves; so that Nature is every way co-extensive with God; is simply the appearance of His essence,—an essence intrinsically incapable of being latent; and *does* "exhaust," in the sense of fully covering, the whole ground of His resources, moment by moment, though leaving still a fertility in reserve, adequate to eternal demands.' This doctrine is called, in distinction from the other, the system of *Immanency;* and its logical characteristic is given when we say that it makes not only God to be the essence of the universe, but the essence of the universe to be God. Within the present generation an active controversy prevailed in Germany between these two modes of conception: the advocates of the former,—the younger Fichte, Chalybæus, and Ulrici,—conceiving that in upholding it they were vindicating the interests of Theism against the unqualified Pantheism of the new Hegelians. The distinction, however, for which they contend, though undoubtedly essential to their religious object, is a very inadequate security for any proper scheme of Theism; and it is quite possible to present both doctrines in such a form

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as to lie strictly within the Pantheistic limits, as we shall find to have been clearly the case in the ancient schools. The accurate relation between the two is this: that the doctrine of Immanency excludes Theism, while that of Transcendency leaves it still possible; but whether the margin of being and power beyond the phenomenal universe be rightly termed GOD depends on something more than this mere overlapping of the scope of nature;—depends on the presence or absence there of those moral attributes which constitute a *Person*. It is to be regretted that so momentous a truth should be made to take the risks of a distinction so fine and shadowy; but this is the form which the controversy between the two theologies assumes, when denuded of its ethical and psychological conditions, and reduced to a question of bare metaphysics. Though the names by which I have denoted these modes of thought are modern, the doctrines themselves are not so. They sustained an active and prolonged conflict with each other, and with a scheme that disputed the claims of both, during the scholastic period: for the Nominalist doctrine which disturbed Europe from the time of Abelard to that of Huss, was opposed by two forms of Realism (Universalia *ante* res and *in* rebus) exactly corresponding to the transcendental and immanental theories of the present day; and these again refer us back for their respective origin to the Academy and the Lyceum. To each of these chief types we must assign its characteristics; and I propose to select Plato as the best developed example of the first. To give anything like a complete account of his philosophy would carry me too far away from my limited object; but I hope to show how the main elements of his metaphysical system propagated their influence downwards upon his ethical doctrine and imparted to it the peculiarities of its shape and contents.

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PART I.

UNPSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES.

BOOK I.

METAPHYSICAL.

BRANCH I.

TRANSCENDENTAL.

PLATO.

PLATO, in common with the rest of his speculative countrymen, did not trouble himself at all with the question to which the whole of our modern philosophy addresses itself,—how do the mind and the universe communicate with one another, and what security have we that they really find each other out? He never raised the doubt whether, perhaps, there might not be a cheat or forgery in their conference with one another, an optical illusion of our faculties, which prevented any correspondence between the phantasms of thought and the scenery of fact. He assumed, as every one then did, that nature out of the mind was just the same as nature in the mind; that *what is* must be identical with *what is thought; what passes* with *what is felt.* The universe did not stand *opposite to the soul*, to be its object and antithetic term; but came up in us *in the shape of soul*, and simply looked in its own glass and broke into its own soliloquy. Like only could know like, or anyhow act on like; so that things to be cognisable by thought, must

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be thoughts themselves; and thoughts, to hold good of things, must be of the essence of things themselves[1]. Hence we do not want two sets of terms, one to designate the world within us, the other to describe the world without us: it is the same world, taken at different ends; and psychology is but the translation of nature, and nature but the potential germ of psychology. Or, if we choose to speak separately of the two great departments of the universe, — viz. the permanent ground and the transient changes,—we may say on the one hand, that perception is only phenomena at their sensitive end, and phenomena only perception in the bud; and, on the other, that ideas are but the rational side of reality, and reality the cosmical side of ideas[2]. Thus merging into one system these subjective and objective spheres which we find it so difficult to adjust, Plato was haunted by another question: how do the real and the phenomenal conduct dealings with one another? how manage to co-exist? and what prevents either from altogether swallowing up the other? and how are we to answer Heracleitus, who will have nothing but phenomena? and Parmenides, who fuses them all away into the unity of being? Into Plato's polemic on these points I must not enter; in the Theætetus he attacks the one-sidedness of the negative or phenomenal school; in the Sophistes and Parmenides, that of the positive or ontological. His own answer to the question is contained in his celebrated *doctrine of ideas;* to which, as the centre and turning-point of his whole philosophy, I must devote a few pages; the more so, because it is here that he encounters the direct resistance of Aristotle, and that the two philosophers,—both Realists and both Pantheists,—separate as representatives respectively of the transcendental and immanental theories.

[1] See e. g. the argument that knowing and being involve interacting power, Plato, Soph. 247 E; 248 D, E.

[2] Plato, Soph. 248 A. Σώματι μὲν ἡμᾶς γενέσει δι' αἰσθήσεως κοινωνεῖν, διὰ λογισμοῦ δὲ ψυχῇ πρὸς τὴν ὄντως οὐσίαν, ἣν ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν φατέ, γένεσιν δὲ ἄλλοτε ἄλλως.

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§ 1. *Doctrine of Ideas.*

There can be little doubt that Plato's doctrine, so far as it modified that of previous philosophers, arose in his mind from the same point which in later writers gave birth to the theory of 'universals;' viz. the logical distinction between the invariable attribute of a class, and the variable accidents of its individual members. The *constant character* which repeats itself in every sample of any natural kind, and which neither wanders over into any other kind, nor absents itself from any cases of *this*, presented itself to his mind as a *unit of ultimate reality*, serving as a nucleus for the play and movement of successive change[1]. This constant character not only pervades all the simultaneous individuals of the same order, but perseveres through the generations of organised beings; so as to force upon us the feeling that it is a determinate type *given* in the very ground of things, the look which expresses a single meaning in nature. In us it appears in the shape of a *general notion*, the notion of the *essence* of the class, cleared of all that is special to any of its members[2]; and as in the universe the type is the base of all individualisation, so in the mind is the general notion the ground of all particular inference, and the only thing which has scientific value and productiveness for the intellect[3]. This configuration of existence, this rational and invisible image, which lies at the heart of things as their essence and of knowledge as its principle, is an εἶδος, or *idea*[4]. It is variously described as the universal in the individual; the durable amid change; the rational amid the sensible; the unit amid plurality; the self-identical amid the diverse. It was evident that no *actual* object, as

[1] Parm. 132 C. Εἶτα οὐκ εἶδος ἔσται τοῦτο τὸ νοούμενον ἓν εἶναι, ἀεὶ ὂν τὸ αὐτὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν;

[2] Theæt. 148 D. Euthyph. 5 D, 6 D. Parm. 132 A, D.

[3] Theæt. 185 E—186 E.

[4] Rep. 596 A. Εἶδος γάρ που τι ἓν ἕκαστον εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι περὶ ἕκαστα τὰ πολλά, οἷς ταὐτὸν ὄνομα ἐπιφέρομεν.

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it comes before us in the physical world, is the same that presents itself to our mind when we hear its common name; and if all its attributes were on an equal footing, and there were nothing in it more intrinsically reliable than its individual features, it would be a mere shifting bundle of phenomena, on which thought would have no hold. But so far as the *thing* coalesces with the *thought*, the abiding essence is present, and rests with one end in our reason and the other in the world. Were there not these durable essences, were the evanescent phenomena of sense the whole sphere open to us, knowledge would be impossible; for of the evanescent there is no knowledge [1].

The ideas of Plato are then the fundamental essences of things, in virtue of which they are what they are. Being thus constitutive of all reality, they are co-extensive with all reality; and there is an idea for whatever can at all be made the object,—not indeed of perception, but of *thought*. That of which there should be no idea would be *ipso facto* a non-existent; and of the non-existent there can be no thought, only the negation of thought [2]. The number of ideas is accordingly indefinite; and they are present, not only in the generations of organised being, but in whatever plurality may be indicated by a single name, even the most insignificant; so that when the young Socrates in the Parmenides hesitates to allow that there can be an εἶδος of hair and dirt and bed and table, as well as of likeness and unlikeness,—of the just, the beautiful, the good,—he is told that philosophy has not yet got the hold of him which it will afterwards obtain, or he would not be afraid, from the apparent meanness of these things, to allow their partnership in ideas [3]. There are ideas, common to nature and the mind,

[1] Soph. 249 C, D. Crat. 440 A, B.

[2] Parm. 134 B—E. Theæt. 188 B—189 A.

[3] Parm. 130 B—E. Compare, however, Aristotle's statement, Metaph. 1070 a, 13, that Plato did not include among his εἴδη conceptions of fabricated objects, or negative and merely relative conceptions. Yet we find Plato himself assigning ideas to *bed*, and *table*, Rep. 596 B. See Zeller's note on this inconsistency, Phil. der Griechen, Th. II. Abth. i. Abschn. 2 sec. 6, § 3. S. 587.

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for every sort of geometrical figure and grammatical form: of attribute (as colour, sound, magnitude, strength), and relation (as equal and unequal, double and half); and even of the contradictory opposites of these ideas, as the bad, the shameful, the unreal. In short, wherever a plurality of phenomena is capable of being gathered up under any one notion, and does not yet fly off into the absolutely individual and transient, there you are still within the circle of ideas[1].

All these εἴδη, however, though equally hypostatised by Plato, are not left side by side as a democracy of real being. As it is their *general* or *notional* character which saves them from the fate of phenomena, so the *more* general exhibit this title in a purer form and stand in higher rank than the less. There is, accordingly, a regular series or graduated organism of ideas, from the confines of particular phenomena to the highest unity of being; and of these, each higher is to be conceived as determining the lower, and having priority in respect to it; so that in the order of reality and causation, the course is ever from the wider notion to the narrower; as in the process of rational deduction the understanding descends from the universal to the particular[2]. In fact, if you take the logician's account of the predicamental line, with its summum genus including secondary genera, and coming down through species and sub-species to the individual, and, applying this pedigree of notions to the objective universe, accept it as a true history of the development and relations of real being, you will approach very near to the Platonic system of ideas. The procedure in the universe that makes it what it is was held to be the same with that of a deductive science, which carries out a comprehensive formula, first into vast groups of facts bound together by some inner analogy, and thence into instances more and more particular: the system of things was regarded as having *thought itself out* into its present form; and all that our science had to do was to copy and repeat in ourselves this

[1] The boundary line of the world of ideas is traced, in Phil. 16 D.
[2] Soph. 253 B—D.

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dialectic of reality. Human deduction was but the photographic transcript of the development of positive existence.

Plato, however, encountered a manifest difficulty, when he endeavoured to describe the relation *inter se* of the higher and lower εἴδη. He could not resort to our logical method, of regarding the lower as *contained in* the higher, or the higher by merely unfolding themselves *yielding* the lower: for this implies movement and explication, the free merging and evolution of ideas,—the one with the other; and Plato had barred himself from this resource by assigning a fixed objective existence to his ideas, and giving to the unideal phenomena the exclusive privilege or discredit of genesis and change. True, his εἴδη were invisible, incorporeal entities, abiding not in any conceivable space, but in the seat of thought (τόπος νοητός): but as they were affirmed to be self-subsisting and numerically plural and distinct without being successive in time, no means were left of describing at once their objective co-existence and their logical relation; the expressions which served the one function sacrificed the other. The most usual device for marking the relation of ideas is to say that the lower *has part in* the higher, or *community* with it[1]; as when it is said that self-restraint has part in the idea of courage, or the sphere in that of roundness:—a phrase hard to reconcile with the unextended and indivisible character ascribed to the εἴδη[2].

This difficulty, however, was far from being unperceived by Plato; and, in common with most others that can be advanced against his doctrine, is stated in the Parmenides; and the illustration employed to relieve it, viz. that the *whole idea is present to each object* all at once, just as *the day* exists undivided in many places at the same time, is rejected as inadequate; on the ground that, in its extension, the day

[1] Parm. *passim*: e. g. ἀνισότητος δὴ μετέχει τὸ ἕν, 161 C. Soph. 253 A. πᾶς οὖν οἷόν ὁποῖα ὁποίοις δυνατὰ κοινωνεῖν.

[2] Parm. 130 E; 131 A. δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι εἴδη ἅττα, ὧν τάδε τὰ ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῶν ἴσχειν, οἷον ὁμοιότητος μὲν μεταλαβόντα ὅμοια, μεγέθους δὲ μεγάλα, κάλλους δὲ καὶ δικαιοσύνης δίκαιά τε καὶ καλὰ γίγνεσθαι.

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is like a sail spread over a number of men, each of whom has only a part of it over him, whereas an idea, in each of its individuals, is whole and indivisible[1]. Yet, a little further on, these perplexities are declared to be insufficient reasons for rejecting the doctrine, as the only ground whereon *a basis of real knowledge* can be won[2]. For this, it should always be remembered, is the interest in which Plato's doctrine is propounded, and without regard to which its purport cannot be rightly estimated. He assumes knowledge to be possible. He found both the previous doctrines which divided the schools unsatisfactory and paradoxical, as rendering it *impossible*. Knowledge implies something *persistent*, and something *diverse and plural*: the Heracleitic school denied the first, by resolving everything into the relative and unstable: the Eleatic denied the second, by comprehending all existence in an unchangeable unity. Plato insisted on the existence and apprehension of *unity amid variety;* and detected the *unity* in the intellectual or universal element with which science has to deal, and which the mind could not apprehend, were it not really there; and *variety* in the sensible or individual accidents, which change with the mutations of feeling and the successions of instances. Yet this variety he did not relegate wholly to the perceptible world. He left room for it also within the sphere of the real by the plurality of ideas,—the multitude of kinds,—which that sphere embraced. As, all of them, partaking of being, they were one: as having each its own determinate essence or type of being, they were many: and so far as *this* is what *that* is not, the being of one is the non-being of another; but, since that other is there, being and non-being alike exist; and any negation which you can truly predicate is not absolute, but only relative, simply affirming *otherness* of being, and not its absence. Such otherness, constituted by mere exclusion from a definite kind, is *any* otherness; it is unlimited (ἄπειρον), as opposed to determinate (πέρας). It is among the *differences* of the

[1] Parm. 131 B, C. [2] Ibid. 135 B, C.

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εἴδη that the whole scope of true and false predication lies and human conceptions hit or miss the essences of things. Take away these definite differences, whether by concentrating the essences into one, or by blowing them off into an infinite dust of phenomena, and knowledge becomes impossible[1]. But the ideas, at once *eternal and uncreated*, yet present in the *transient and originated*, at once *plural* and yet ranged in gradations which carried them up into a *supreme One*, at once *essences* subsisting *really* in things, and *thoughts* present in the mind, combined the requisites which earlier doctrines had separated, and completed the conditions of reconciliation between knowledge and being. In its results the doctrine is tantamount to that which Aristotle has expressed in one short maxim: that 'like is known by like, and that things have existence from their first principles[2].' The ἀρχαὶ whence things *are* must be the ἀρχαὶ whence things *are known*; and the first principles of knowing and of being must coalesce.

The tentative character of Plato's speculation, intentionally marked in the prevailing structure of his dialogues, is nowhere more evident than in his efforts to define his doctrine of ideas. They present the liveliest image of a mind struggling with the inadequacy of language to shape into consistent expression relations which, nevertheless, co-exist in reality. That he was not wholly satisfied with the terms in which he had recorded his written thought we know from Aristotle; who tells us of quite a new form into which his characteristic doctrine had been cast. In this, his εἴδη are called 'numbers' (ἀριθμοί), only with the strange qualification that they are not made up of units, and are not susceptible of additive combination (οὐ μοναδικοί and ἀσύμβλητοι[3]). Under such conditions, one naturally asks, what numerical characteristic can remain? what else do we mean

[1] Soph. 254 C—258 B.

[2] De An. I. ii. 7, γιγνώσκεσθαι γὰρ τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον, τὰ δὲ πράγματα ἐκ τῶν ἀρχῶν εἶναι.

[3] Metaph. 1080 a, 12 seqq.

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by 'number' than the aggregation of units? How Plato would have answered these questions can only be conjectured; as Aristotle, in interpreting his comparison of ideal with mathematical relations, specifies only the features of difference and is silent about the points of analogy. But as each εἶδος was ἕν τι, in nature and in thought, and yet was not excluded from more or less concurrence with others, it seems to be and to do much the same as an arithmetical unit which enters now into this, now into that higher figure. Further than this, however, the resemblance cannot be carried. The units of calculation are all self-repetitions; the ideal units are all separate essences. To combine the former into greater values, you have only to tie them together into lots of various size; to unite the latter, no such mechanic process will avail, but you must see how far the essence of each kind agrees with that of another. The propositions which arise in the former case are quantitative equations; in the latter, are qualitative predications; measured, in the one case, by the extension, in the other, by the comprehension of the terms. In the comparison of εἴδη that are not wholly heterogeneous, the specific conception is fuller than the generic, and corresponds with the higher of two numbers; and in the order of genesis it must be regarded as the later, since it presupposes and carries the other, while the other can exist without it. Hence it is that Plato claims the relation of '*before and after*' for his ideal numbers; they range themselves in a predicamental line of unalterable order. It is true that he also speaks of a certain 'before and after' having place among arithmetical numbers; but *there* the phrase denotes quite a different relation, viz. that of *factor and product:* if 6 arise from 2×3, it is posterior to them. The difference is that between ideal subsumption and numerical multiplication[1].

If the several forms of expression which Plato gives to the 'one and many' are closely scrutinised, it will be

[1] See an exhaustive note (5) of Zeller's in the third edition of Phil. der Griechen, II. i. S. 569–574.

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found that there are three distinct subjects of the plurality: (1) the εἴδη themselves are *many entities:* (2) each εἶδος 'partaking of' any other which is predicable of it, has a *plurality in its contents:* (3) each εἶδος has *dependent species*, except indeed the lowest, which has only individuals under it. Many ideas: many qualities: many kinds.

In defending the claim of his εἴδη to a place in the sphere of real being, Plato was well aware that the alternative theory must be, that they were only thoughts present to some thinking subject. This position accordingly he assails by a direct refutation, founded indeed on an inadmissible assumption, but none the less forbidding us to impute to him the opinion which he rejects. If each universal is only a thought in some mind, it attests, wherever it exists, the presence of a mind. But the single thought must be of a single something, and a single universal must be that of a single nature, i.e. the subjective εἶδος is the cognition of an objective εἶδος. By the hypothesis, this apprehended εἶδος is only a thought, and everything that has it must be a thinker; unless you will say that there are thoughts which are never thought[1]. The argument, which thus reduces us to the dilemma of 'idealism or contradiction,' is evidently a mere play with an ambiguity in the word εἶδος. Because this same term is used to denote now a *cognitio* and then a *cognitum*, it is inferred that the predicates of the two must be identical, though one is a psychological fact, and the other a class of natural objects. But the reason, however invalid, manifestly discards the subjective explanation of the εἴδη as an absurdity. That in *our* mind at all events we cannot look for their seat is further concluded from their absolute character, as coinciding with the very essences of things; 'for no one,' it is urged, 'who assigns to each nature an absolute essence, can pretend that any one of them is *in us;* since this would make it not absolute[2],' and reduce it to a phenomenon of another nature. There remains, however, still a resource for saving the subjective

[1] Parm. 132 B, C. [2] Ib. 133 C.

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theory: may not the absolute ideas be referred by Plato to the Divine Mind? Do they not simply mean, in his philosophy, the preconceptions which the universe has realised? The suggestion promises so great a relief to the modern imagination, and brings the Greek speculation so much nearer to our own, that it has found favour with not a few eminent critics, like Brandis and Stallbaum, whose judgments always reward careful study. Yet the balance of evidence appears to me decisively on the other side. True it is that in several of the poetical and semi-mythical passages of the Phædrus, the Timæus, and the Republic, dealings are described between God and the εἴδη which seem to subordinate them to His disposal: He knows them[1]; He contemplates them[2]; He gives them place in the system of the world[3]; nay, in a single instance, He is even spoken of as the Maker of them[4]. But in none of these relations are they presented as psychological phenomena of himself; on the contrary they are data on which a transitive activity is directed; he knows them because they are already there; he contemplates them as infinite models of all finite order and beauty; he sets them in the

[1] Parm. 134 C, E; Tim. 53 D. [2] Tim. 28 A, B.

[3] Ib. 29, A—C.

[4] Rep. 597. The aim of this curious passage is, to show that the ultimate source of each *Kind* of objects must be a *single essence;* and that so long as our cognition stops short of this goal and is still detained among number, we are conversing with copies and not with the real. Secondary agents can work out only imitations: these may repeat themselves two or three deep, but are all dependent at the upper end on an ideal type which must be credited to the very nature of things. Resorting as usual to a homely example, Socrates supposes a drawing to be executed of *a bed:* as the artist copies the work of the cabinet-maker, so the cabinet-maker copies the idea of bed in its true essence,—of bed as it means to be. Behind this you cannot go; it comes out of no workshop; and if you want what shall stand to it in such relation as that of the artisan to his wooden bed, you can name nothing but the nature of things, or God. The purport of the passage is complete when it has thrown back the εἴδη into the last resort of reality. In allowing the language of his analogy to carry him beyond this purport, Plato commits a unique inconsistency. Everywhere else the εἴδη appear as unoriginated; and though God is represented both as ποιητής and as δημιουργός, the product of His work is quite other than the 'eternal ideas.'

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cosmos by mingling with them the conditions of visible and temporal existence; and if, for a moment, he is conceived as *making* them, it is still as an artist creates an external work, and not as a thinker experiences his inward thoughts. Had Plato held the Divine Mind in reserve as the subjective seat of his ideas, how could he have argued that, if they are only thoughts everything that partakes of them must be a thinker? This would not follow at all, if, throughout the finite sphere, there were an infinite subject to think them. Of the various epithets indeed by which the εἴδη are characterised, there is hardly one that is compatible with this interpretation: they are eternal[1], self-subsistent[2], unchangeable[3], separate in their existence from the objects that partake in them[4], and prior to these. On this last feature (that they are χωριστά) it is that Aristotle fixes in his criticism of the doctrine[5]: a criticism which, as Zeller justly remarks, would have no relevancy if applied to ideas of the divine mind[6].

Thus relegated to separation from the world, and without native claim on either the human or the divine mind, these homeless essences seem lifted by Plato into a sublime but somewhat disconsolate position; and it is not surprising that his later followers tried to leave them less at large. When we ask him to take us more determinately into their presence and show us their real seat, he only forbids us to look for them in space, or any living natures throughout earth or sky[7], and sends us to an invisible heaven above the heavens[8],—a thought-sphere[9], where at last are found the formless, colourless, impalpable essences of beauty, temperance, righteousness, and truth[10]. Whatever else may

[1] Tim. 29 A. *ἀΐδιον.* [2] Soph. 255 C. *αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτά.*
[3] Symp. 211 A. *μεθ' αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν.*
[4] Parm. 130 B. *χωρὶς μὲν εἴδη αὐτὰ ἅττα, χωρὶς δὲ τὰ τούτων αὖ μετέχοντα.*
[5] Met. 1040 b, 26 seqq. 1086 a, 31 seqq.
[6] Phil. der Griechen II. 1. II. vi. 2, p. 561. 3te Aufl.
[7] Symp. 211 A. [8] *ὑπερουράνιον τόπον*, Phædr. 247 C.
[9] *τόπον νοητόν*, Rep. 517 B. [10] Phædr. 247 C, D.

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lie hid in the glow of this transfigured philosophy, it at least means that true knowledge has its principle, not in the perceptions of sense, but in the categories of reason; and that these, far from being illusory compends of animal feeling, are the essences of real existence emerging into conscious thought.

The most difficult problem presented by the Platonic 'ideas' is also the most important; viz. to determine whether any inherent movement or causal activity is attributed to them. The evidence, on the face of it, is not self-consistent; and in dealing with the highly imaginative writings which contain it, the interpreter on either side finds it easy to dismiss as merely figurative whatever tells against him. When we remember that the ideas were the forms under which all *real being* was conceived, and meet with the statement, 'I therefore affirm, as the definition of real being (τὰ ὄντα), that it is simply *power*[1];' when we are told, in illustration of this, that real being is the object of knowledge, and the soul the knower of it, and that so a relation of passive and active subsists between them, each in its way operating on the other; we seem to have alighted on incontrovertible proof of the causality of the ideas; especially when it winds up with the enthusiastic outburst—'And, good God! can we really be ready to believe that movement and life and soul and thought are not present with absolute being; that it neither lives nor thinks, but, for all its august and sacred look, stands fast in mindless immobility[2]?' Before surrendering ourselves to the impression of these words, two aids in their interpretation must be invoked and estimated. (1) They are put into the mouth, not of Socrates (Plato's usual spokesman), but of the 'Stranger,' who in this dialogue represents more nearly, and yet criticises also, the Eleatic doctrine; and who, in a direct attack upon the doctrine of 'Ideas,' extorts from the Platonist the assertion that 'real being is always unchangeably the same, and that variation is limited to the phenomenal[3].' The stranger's

[1] Soph. 247 E. [2] Ib. 248 D, E. [3] Ib. 248 B.

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definition of being is therefore offered not in expounding but in controverting the theory of εἴδη; and even if we suppose that Plato is here confessing, in the person of another, difficulties of which he had become conscious himself, the conclusion will be, that he had receded somewhat, in the interlocutor's direction, from his characteristic doctrine; not, that the doctrine, in its complete form, invested the 'ideas' with causality. (2) It is easy to divine the mode and degree of concession by which Plato made room, in his system of real being, for the predicate of 'power' demanded by the stranger. That demand is first pressed, in the dialogue, not upon Plato's *manifold* conception of real being, but upon the Eleatic conception of real being in its absolute *unity;* and hence the speaker, to prepare the way for his criticism, as directed upon his master Parmenides, deprecates the charge of 'parricide,' and declares that he enters upon his task with trembling heart[1]. He proceeds to show that the doctrine of absolute being cannot be stated so as to cover all the nature of being, and makes no provision for any 'coming into being' which might supply the lack[2]. It is impossible to work out a theory which treats the All as one fixed existence, without beginning, end, or parts, self-contained and self-identical: contradictions without end emerge from it, unless some principle of movement is admitted into it. This objection applies to every doctrine of absolute being, to Plato's many εἴδη as well as to the Eleatic unity: Being that cannot stir, or enter into relations, does not complete the essence of being; it must at least be capable of being known. Somewhere or other, therefore, room must be found for the predicate of causality. In the Eleatic unity it can have no entrance without contradicting and annihilating the whole doctrine, by affirming and denying immobility of the same subject. But in the Platonic plurality of εἴδη there was already an organism of logical sequence and interdependence, determining a certain track and movement of thought, and participant communion of each with some

[1] Soph. 241 D. [2] Ib. 245 C, D.

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others; and if only the supreme term were invested with the required causality, the rest, taken one by one, might remain as they were, partaking as before of its nature in the order of their dependence. It would be still true, therefore, that the εἴδη, as πολλὰ, were without activity: no one of them could set itself in motion, except that which stood at the head of all: only as ἕν, i.e. homogeneous in entity with their head, had they part and lot in its δύναμις. In thus far setting them free from a state of fixity, Plato is avowedly relinquishing a feature in his published theory of them, and confessing its need of amendment. The difficulties indeed which meet the interpreter of the Sophistes are partly due to its being, in more than one respect, a dialogue of retractation: in the person, on the one hand, of the 'Stranger,' before whom Socrates sits silent; on the other, of Theætetus, the Eleatic disciple who renounces Parmenides, while Plato deserts himself: in each case under the same conviction, viz. that causality must receive a more effective recognition, and not be put off with an ignominious banishment into the sphere of non-being. In the Sophistes, the author contents himself with acknowledging the defect; his mode of remedying it is reserved for another occasion.

Against this plea, that the admission of causality into the scheme of 'ideas' was an afterthought, it is urged that they are spoken of as causes in the earlier dialogues which are specially their own. In the Phædo, e.g. it is said[1] that the cause of any pair of things being two is their partaking of the idea of duality; and of each of them being one, its partaking of the idea of unity; and that whatever is beautiful or good or great owes its predicate to an absolute 'idea' of beauty, or goodness; and that all other attempts to account for these characters, whether by processes such as addition or subtraction, or by material elements such as light or shape or tone, or by sensations, such as warmth and fragrance, are nugatory and confusing. But here, surely, the ambiguity of the word αἰτία cannot escape us. The εἶδος is

[1] Phædo 100 D—101 D.

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no otherwise the 'cause' of the particular sample of beauty than as every generic whole is the cause of its own instances. When you find that the phenomenon is an instance of a larger law (or, in Platonic phrase, belongs to a more comprehensive essence), it is indeed *accounted for*, in the sense of being no longer an object of separate and isolated curiosity, inasmuch as it is lost in a category already settled, and its place has been determined in the order of *your reason;* but its *physical cause*, i.e. the power which has produced it, or ordered its appearance here rather than there, is not explained by naming its genus. This is only to say that classification, whatever be its theory, is not causation. If Plato had intended, in this passage, to endow his 'ideas' with susceptibility of action and passion, the interplay involved in this relation must have subsisted among themselves. Instead of this, however, he expressly contends[1] that ideas admit of no modification or control by the influence of others which are opposite; on the approach of such opposites, they simply *retire* and decline to have their self-identity compromised: the idea of 'greatness' e.g. *flies off*, when an object in which it was seated comes 'to partake of smallness:' it disdains to stay and become small or become in any respect other than it was. And so it is, he adds, with all the ideas. No more distinct denial of their changeableness can be conceived.

The doctrine of these passages then leaves us free to accept in their natural sense the epithets, excluding the notion of active power, which are habitually applied to the εἴδη. When, by a natural variation, the 'idea' becomes an 'ideal' (παράδειγμα[2]), these epithets recur: as the pattern contemplated not only by human reason in its intellectual acts, but by the divine as the artist of the world, each absolute εἶδος is eternal, motionless, unchangeable, self-identical, intrinsically apprehensible by mind alone. The original of *Time*, e.g. is a living eternity (ζῶον ἀΐδιον), stationary duration (μένων αἰὼν ἐν ἑνί),—the copy of which

[1] Phædo 102 D, E. [2] Tim. 37 D, E.

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became 'a moving thing going by number' (κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσαν), and circling in days and nights and months and years; and it is precisely because the Creator in His work looked only 'to the same and the unchangeable,' which is cognisable by reason alone, that 'the world is the most beautiful of creations and He the best of causes[1].' These pre-existent patterns of the universe, copied into it as the objective essence of each intelligible nature, are expressly identified with the self-existent ideas unperceived by sense, and 'apprehended by mind alone, in which none but the gods and very few men have share[2].' After every allowance for the poetical dress of these statements, we cannot miss the assumption which lies not in their form but in their very substance, viz. that the 'ideas' are the prior conditions of all creative activity, and are not themselves the agents which exert it, but only the passive prototypes which, but for the energy of an extrinsic power, would never be born into a phenomenal world.

The disciple of Hegel, however, is pressed by a natural temptation to identify the 'Idee' of his school with the Platonic 'Ideas;' and is unwilling to withhold from the latter the process of inherent movement which he attributes to the former. If he can but wake up the εἴδη from their apparent slumber, and persuade them to claim a power of self-realisation, he will win to his side the greatest of allies. This hope receives some countenance from the changed style of Plato's later dialogues, in which Pythagorean and Eleatic phraseology almost supersedes the language of the 'ideas,' and raises doubts about the relative scope of the old conceptions and the new. The Philebus in particular offers a doctrine of causality which does not readily adjust itself to the positions hitherto laid down, and which Zeller, with characteristic skill, directs against them. On the strength of a celebrated passage in this dialogue, he confidently invests the 'ideas' with dynamic attributes, and absorbs into them, as inherent in their essence, the whole of the

[1] Tim. 29 A. [2] Ib. 51 B—E.

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agency which, in the Timæus and elsewhere, is referred to a separate Creator. It is due to so great a master in Greek philosophy to weigh his interpretation with respectful care.

In order to settle the relative positions of pleasure and of intellect to each other, and of both to the good, a fourfold classification is offered by Socrates 'of all now-existing things[1].' God has shown us, (1) a determinate kind of existence (τὸ πέρας): (2) an indeterminate or infinite (τὸ ἄπειρον): (3) a mixture of these two: (4) the cause of this mixture. We have here a new series of categories, in which no mention is made of the 'ideas,' and we are at a loss to settle their intended place. It is evident that much depends on the correct assignment of that place. If, with Brandis, we refer them to the first head, they are among the passive elements disposed of by 'the Cause,' and enter as constituents into the 'mixture' which it sets up. If, with Zeller, we range them under the fourth head, they become identical with 'the Cause,' and play the part of supreme power, of which the universe is the self-realisation. The first head, when thus deserted by them, has to look out for a new meaning; which Zeller thinks is adequately supplied by taking πέρας to denote purely *mathematical relations*. The choice between these interpretations requires us to collect the defining marks of each of the four heads.

The strongest plea for the strictly numerical and geometrical reading of τὸ πέρας is contained in the following sentence[2]: 'All things which, instead of admitting indefinite grades of more or less, admit their opposites, viz. first the equal and equality, then the equal and double, and whatever is related as number to number, or measure to measure, we should rightly refer to the class of the determinate.' This certainly looks very like an account of definite proportions; and if it were intended to exhaust, instead of simply exemplifying, the contents of the first head, it would establish Zeller's inference. But the inference must be held in suspense till we see whether, under the class of determinate

[1] Phil. 23 C. [2] Ib. 25 A.

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essence, anything more is included than definite proportions. If the class lies within the bounds of the words just cited, its constitutive condition is a constant ratio between two components of a nature,—as between oxygen and hydrogen in water,—'number to number, measure to measure.' Yet elsewhere it comes upon the stage without any such mark, as a mere group of things resembling each other in some single quality. The reputed work of Thoth, e.g. in reducing the manifold elements of articulate speech to their true classes of vowels, liquids, mutes, etc. is adduced as an example of *πέρας* discovered *ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ*[1]. And, in order to attain to any real knowledge, this detection of a uniting *δεσμός* must be applied to all things in which there is *unity*, *likeness*, *sameness*, and their opposites[2]. Moreover, in the final recapitulation of the results of the dialogue, we find *moral qualities*, viz. the moderate and seasonable (*μέτριον καὶ καίριον*), named under this head[3]. It is inadmissible, therefore, to confine the meaning of *πέρας* to mathematical relations. They are selected to illustrate the conception, only as giving the most distinct samples of definite *kinds*.

What more *πέρας* includes than quantitative relations will best be understood, if we first clear up the opposite conception, of the 'indefinite,' or 'infinite,' for the word *ἄπειρον* is used to cover both these very different meanings. Plato supplies two distinct keys for opening to us the contents of this term: it signifies *gradation without number;* and it signifies *number without measure.* The former presents itself in every indivisible quality, as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, whose variations of intensity are fluxional, not differential, and are without assignable beginning or end. The latter presents itself wherever we meet 'the many' without 'the one,' i.e. the irreducible multitudes that, having no centres of common affinity, defy classification and remain a mere sand-desert of individuals. In the one case its symbol is *μᾶλλόν τε καὶ ἧττον*; in the other, it is *πλῆθος*. Vague sen-

[1] Phil. 18 B, C. [2] Ib. 19 B. [3] Ib. 66 A.

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sation, as opposed to discriminative thought; wild force expended without rule; the raw matter of creation prior to the organic world; are thus, for evident reasons, brought under this negation of limit. In the phenomenal sphere all changes that have no constancy of law; in descending division all singulars below the *infima species* where likeness is banished by pure difference, belong to the unreclaimed realm of the ἄπειρον.

These things being premised, the proof that the 'ideas' are assigned to the first head assumes the simplest form. Things which are identical with the same are identical with one another; and we find in the Philebus a middle term, viz. '*the One*,' used as the equivalent, now of εἶδος, and now of πέρας. The philosophical problem of the 'one and many' arises, it is said, not in the case of any single concrete object (of 'things that are born and die'), but in regard to the unity of essence involved in generic appellations and abstracts, as man, ox, beauty, good: here we encounter the questions, 'first, whether we are to assign real existence to such units: and then, how these, being each invariably one and the same and admitting of neither genesis nor destruction, resolutely persist in this unity, while yet our next step must be to plant this or that one of them in the infinitude of originated things, either by dispersion and reduction to many, or as everywhere entire in itself though separate from itself, one and the same in the one and the many, which would seem to be the most impossible of all[1].' Here, it is plain, the ἓν which is subject of discussion is simply εἶδος, the essence of a kind; and the perplexing questions which it starts are the very same which are raised in the Parmenides out of the doctrine of ideas. The πολλά, on the other hand, called also ἄπειρα, are the phenomenal instances or objects into which the essence is born.

The 'One' which is here identified with 'idea' is on the next page identified with 'the determinate.' In a highly curious passage[2] Socrates expounds the right method of

[1] Phil. 15 A, B. [2] Ib. 16 C—E.

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discovery by the discussion of scientific conceptions; and describes it as a process of logical division, copied from the actual composition of things in the world out of the two elements of real and phenomenal. Through this mixture, present in all concrete objects, we are to pursue '*the one*,' and disengage it in thought from the variable many, i. e. to alight upon the *essence of any genus* which may lurk in the multitude: then, we are further to look out for secondary unities within this primary, i. e. for *species* which dispose the members of the genus in orderly groups; and not to abandon this successive quest of subordinate centres of union, till we find ourselves in a mere crowd of unallied individuals. This is expressed by saying that 'we are not to apply to the multitude the idea of the indeterminate (*τοῦ ἀπείρου*) till we have got into view every definite number (*ἀριθμόν*) which it has between the indeterminate (or the infinite) and the one (*μεταξὺ τοῦ ἀπείρου τε καὶ τοῦ ἑνός*).' The ground assigned for this procedure is, that it retraces the steps of nature in the genesis of things as they now are, laying out by analysis the elements of her synthesis: for our postulate must be that in their present existence all things are made up of the one and many, of the determinate and the indeterminate[1].

Here, the correlative of *ἄπειρον* is now given as *ἕν*, and now as *πέρας*; and these terms, while interchangeable with each other, are also replaced by the word *ἰδέα*[2]. Surely there is no escape from the conclusion that it is the category of the determinate under which the 'ideas' are to be found. And, if so, there is nothing as yet to disturb the *εἴδη* from their eternal immobility.

The 'ideas' then, being in the first head, cannot carry the causality which constitutes the fourth: they are, on the contrary, the objects, with the *ἄπειρον*, of its blending and evolving activity. It is from the union of these opposites that the universe arises, and supplies the contents of the third head. It only remains to press a little nearer to the

[1] *πέρας δὲ καὶ ἀπειρίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς ξύμφυτον ἐχόντων.*
[2] *μίαν ἰδίαν θεμένους ζητεῖν.*

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cause of that union, and collect any predicates which may make the conception more definite.

In the first place, we find Socrates insisting on the absolute necessity of setting up his fourth category, on the ground that the others provide only the materials and the products of the creative process; and 'all that comes into being must needs do so by reason of some cause[1];' and 'we make a fourth head of this cause, having sufficiently proved it to be distinct from the other three[2].' In the next place, he asks what he is to put into this blank category; and whether 'a just reverence does not require that wisdom and knowledge and mind should be placed there; all philosophers agreeing that Mind is king of heaven and earth[3].' In vindication of this position, he then turns the focus of his scrutiny upon man, as a universe in little, in order to find out what constitutes each of the categories in him, and especially what are the elements which perform the function of the fourth. Here, it is the living organism which is the product of matter tempered by law: but that which wields it with directing power and disciplines it for wholesome ends is always some one or other of the forms of wisdom[4]: without mind, man would be effect alone, and not a Cause. From the microcosm learn to read the macrocosm. If the former has its little modicum of material and of law from the vast storehouse of the latter, whence but from the same source can it draw its allowance of causality? Homogeneous therefore must be the ordering and acting power in the human person and in the universe: the difference is only that between the individual soul and the Soul of souls. And the position is thus made good, that 'in the All there is a copious indeterminate datum and adequate determinate essence, and besides these a Cause of no ordinary kind, which, ordering and disposing years and seasons and months, has the fullest right to the name Wisdom and Mind.' But Wisdom and Mind can come into expression only through a psychical life: we therefore say that 'in the nature of Zeus

[1] Phil. 26 E. [2] Ib. 27 B. [3] Ib. 28 A, C. [4] Ib. 30 B.

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(the living cosmos) there proves, by reason of the causal power, to be an indwelling royal ψυχή and royal Mind[1].' The reasoning of this much-debated passage is unintelligible, unless it runs thus: '*Cause* you must have: Mind is the only cause: therefore there must be immanent Mind: else, the need of a causal power remains unsatisfied.' It all depends on the position (established in the previous sentence) that Mind and Cause are two names for one and the same thing, and, in their denotative character, are interchangeable; and its cogency and meaning would be lost, if we tore them asunder from this coalescence, and substituted between them a successive relation by treating the νοῦς as the *effect* of the αἰτία. Yet into this inconsequence we are betrayed, if we accept Zeller's comment that the universal mind 'is here referred to a superior cause' (viz. 'die Idee,' i. e. the εἶδη[2]), and Jowett's corresponding translation, 'Would you not say that in the divine nature of Zeus there is the mind and soul of a King, and that *the power of the cause engenders this?*' By this reduction of Mind to a created thing, the argument is baulked of its plainly intended conclusion, viz. that νοῦς in the universe must occupy the same relative place as that which it holds in man, i. e. the fourth category, which, *as Causal*, is intrinsically ἕτερον from the rest. From this category our critics displace it, and by throwing it back into the third, allow the whole reasoning to collapse in confusion[3]. Yet the care which Plato had

[1] Phil. 30 C, D.

[2] Philosophie der Griechen, II. 1. S. 558.

[3] The passage in the original runs thus: Οὐκοῦν ἐν μὲν τῷ τοῦ Διὸς ἐρεῖς φύσει βασιλικὴν μὲν ψυχήν, βασιλικὸν δὲ νοῦν ἐγγίγνεσθαι διὰ τὴν τῆς αἰτίας δύναμιν. That this sentence, taken by itself and apart from its logical context, admits of the translation given to it, I will not deny; although, to express the notion of *being engendered*, I should have expected to find the word ἐγγεννᾶσθαι rather than ἐγγίγνεσθαι. As the word, however, may certainly mean 'to be *born* in,' the difference is not material. But this meaning itself, if not already archaic in Plato's time, had prevailingly given way to the more abstract signification, '*to be in by nature*,' or '*to show itself as inherent*,' or '*prove to be inherent*:' just as εὐμενὴς γίγνεσθαι means 'to *show one's self* well-disposed,' οἱ ἐσθλοὶ γενόμενοι, 'those who *prove to be* good,' without any implication

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taken to secure the fourth place for Mind alone is shown by his repetition of the claim with every variety of expression. 'Mind is Cause:' *that* is its class:' 'of that family it is:' and if anything else among the four heads is ever called by the family name, νοῦς is '*ancestor*' (γενούστης) to the claim. 'Nor is this doctrine uttered as a random word; but in support of those who of old set forth that Mind for ever rules the universe[1].'

The conclusion which is thus reached, that Plato withholds causality from his 'ideas,' and assigns it to another category, is confirmed by the earliest criticism directed against his doctrine, viz. that his pattern ideas in which the concrete instances partake are but idle talk and poetic metaphor; inasmuch as he provides no working agency to make copies from them[2]. This remark of Aristotle's is indeed quite groundless, made in forgetfulness of the

of '*coming to be*' so. In this use of the verb, the subject of it is said to give evidence of the attribute affirmed respecting it; and if to the mere affirmation a διὰ τί is appended, it will tell what is *our reason* for believing the attribute, not what is *the cause* of its being. What is *the reason* that has been pressed in argument and is here summed up for believing in a cosmic Mind?—that, without it, the course and order of the world will be destitute of their indispensable causal power: it is therefore 'on account of the power of the cause,' that we must say, 'a kingly intellect evinces itself as inherent in the nature of the divine universe.' It will not be questioned that this rendering is more consistent than the other with the proper accusative meaning of the preposition διά; though I am aware that instances may be adduced, even from this dialogue (e. g. 26 E. διά τινα αἰτίαν), of a usage in which the distinction is apparently lost between the logical and the physical ground. One more remark: Is it right to fuse the two phrases βασιλικὴν μὲν ψυχήν, βασιλικὸν δὲ νοῦν into one undivided conception, 'the soul and mind of a king?' or is the distinction between them to be observed, that νοῦς is eternal entity, and ψυχή a medium constituted for its manifestation? I cannot persuade myself that this relation between them is here to be disregarded; especially as the immediately preceding proposition emphasises it as a step in the argument: σοφία μὴν καὶ νοῦς ἄνευ ψυχῆς οὐκ ἂν ποτε γενοίσθην, 'wisdom surely and mind could never come into manifestation without ψυχή' (*not* 'cannot *exist*'). From Mind as the causal power two conclusions result: its supreme sway in the universe; and its exercise of this sway in the phenomenal sphere through its created medium of an *Anima mundi*. Beyond the ψυχὴ there is νοῦς as its αἰτία: beyond the νοῦς there is nothing higher; it is αἰτία itself.

[1] Phil. 30 D—31 A. [2] Arist. Metaph. 991 b, 20-23.

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supreme powers that play so great a part in the Timæus, the Republic, and the Philebus; but it shows that, in the critic's opinion, the εἴδη were inherently in want of a cause to bring them to phenomenal birth.

I have already hinted that this passiveness of the class was not absolutely universal, but admitted an exception in the supreme term. Hitherto we have found Plato identifying *Cause* with *Mind:* we must now add that he identifies *Mind* with the *Good;* and that 'the good' is with him the apex and crown of the system of 'ideas.' The first of these positions is no matter of inference, but is laid down *totidem verbis.* After Philebus, in the dialogue that bears his name, has been worsted in his advocacy of 'pleasure' as identical with 'good,' Socrates, who represents the counter-claim of *Mind,* sums up thus: 'I think it then sufficiently proved that Philebus's goddess is not to be considered as identical with the good.' Philebus retorts, 'Neither is your Mind, Socrates, the good; the same exception will be taken to it.' Socrates answers: 'Perhaps so, Philebus, to *my* mind; but not to the true and divine Mind; the case is different there[1].' Nor is it only under its name of 'Mind' that this subject is identified with 'the good:' under its other name of 'Cause' the process is repeated. In the latter part of the dialogue, Socrates, unable to define the essence of 'the good' in its absoluteness, determines it step by step through three of its contents, Beauty, Symmetry, Truth: and winds up with the words, 'If then we cannot seize "the good" by chasing it with one idea, yet when we have caught it by the help of three,—beauty, symmetry, truth,—we may say that we have the best right to treat it as *Cause* of the mingled elements, and may affirm that it proves itself such precisely in that it is good[2].'

The evidence of the second position, that 'the good' is the ultimate pinnacle of the range of 'ideas,' is contained in some highly characteristic passages of the Republic. The first which I shall quote might perhaps suffice; for it directly

[1] Phil. 22 C. [2] Ib. 65 A.

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affirms the proposition to be established: 'God knows whether it be true; but this is what is evident to me; in the sphere of the known *the idea of the Good* is ultimate and needs an effort to be seen: but, once seen, compels the conclusion that here is the cause, for all things else, of whatever is beautiful and right: in the visible world, parent of light and of its lord; in the intellectual world, bearing itself the lordship and from itself supplying truth and mind. And this it is which must fix the eye of one who is to act with wisdom in private or in public life[1].' These remarkable words, besides determining the place of 'the Good' as the culminating εἶδος, affirm its dynamic causality no less clearly than its logical supremacy; for it is the author of light and of the sun, over and above being the absolute original of all particular truth, beauty, and right.

If, under the loose cover of the word αἰτία, the idea of the Good could thus play the double part of physical cause and rational ground, we may well believe Aristotle's report that Plato identified it with the absolute One[2]; for if it can unify those dissimilar things, it deserves no less. But every system of monism has to break a number of antitheses which cling to the very nature of human thought; and Plato's first principle has yet a harder feat to perform, in being at once itself and another, the apprehender of truth and the truth apprehended, the object which is not the subject and the subject which is not the object. For this achievement he lends it the aid of his happiest imagination, and maintains that it has only to do what the sun constantly effects, in that it supplies both terms of the relation between vision and the visible. 'The idea of the Good, then, you are to say, is that which imparts truth to the objects known, and faculty to the knower: you are to consider it as the cause at

[1] Republic, 517 B, C.

[2] Met. 1091 b, 14, αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι. That Plato, though not named, is here referred to, is to be seen from the context, and from comparison with 988 a, 14. See Bonitz's note, p. 587 of his edition of Arist. Met.

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once of knowledge and of truth as known. And, beautiful as are these two,—knowledge and truth,—this their Cause you will rightly deem other and fairer than they. Yet, just as light and vision were before rightly deemed by us sun-like without being the sun, so now are these two rightly referred to the type of the Good without being the Good: for *that* a place must be reserved of yet higher honour[1].' Nor do the resources of this ingenious analogy stop here: the Sun has other functions than to illuminate; and the Idea of the Good, than to enlighten: from each goes forth a creative energy over a boundless field beyond. 'The Sun, I think you will say, imparts to visible things not only their visibility, but also their genesis and growth and nurture, without being itself a genesis[2]; and so, we must say, it is the Good which imparts to things known not only their susceptibility of being known, but also their existence and their essence, though the Good is not itself an essence, but far transcends essence in venerableness and power[3].' Here then, it is evident, this august principle is invested with not only a primacy among the ideas (*ἀκινήτους οὐσίας*, as Aristotle calls them)[4], but with a causality withheld from all the rest as its progeny,—the derived essences of things. Relatively to them, as a class, it holds an exceptional position; and when we ask, 'is it one of them, or is it beyond them?' the answer must be, 'it is both:' it is one of them, by their participation of its being; it is beyond them, by its exclusive spontaneity of power.

When we assemble together the predicates which, one by one, have gathered upon the Idea of the Good, viz. subjective unity, eternal reality, discriminative thought, affinity with beauty, symmetry, and right, and finally, power to realise them in the birth and growth of things, we cannot

[1] Rep. 508 E.

[2] He recurs to this favourite thought respecting the 'Sun, of this great world both eye and soul:' *Αὐτὸς* (i. e. *ὁ ἥλιος*) *ὁ τὰς τε ὥρας παρέχων, καὶ ἐνιαυτοὺς καὶ πάντα ἐπιτροπεύων τὰ ἐν τῷ ὁρωμένῳ τόπῳ, καὶ ἐκείνων ὧν σφεῖς ἑώρων τρόπον τινὰ πάντων αἴτιος.*—Rep. 516 C.

[3] Rep. 509 B.

[4] Met. 1091 b, 13.

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be surprised to find this supreme εἶδος assuming the Divine name. Intellect and causality directed upon the Good, and occupying the absolute headship of all, must be spoken of, when fused into one conception, in terms of intending thought, will, and character, and become interchangeable with the idea of God. The only wonder is that Plato himself betrays so little consciousness of this, and instead of passing off and on between εἶδος and θεός in any dialogue which treats of either, only once [1] (so far as I remember) identifies the θεῖος νοῦς with τἀγαθόν, and else conducts quite separately his discussion of the Idea of the Good, and his exposition of the Creator's work and relation to the world,—the one in the Philebus and Republic, the other in the Timæus. It is usually assumed that the former alone was the expression of serious philosophical conviction; and that the theistic form of the latter is purely mythical, and, as addressed only to the pupil's imagination, has no significance for the critic of Plato's doctrine. To this point I shall hereafter revert.

§ 2. *Classification of Sciences and Faculties.*

At the seat of Causality which we have reached, we hold the link which connects the Metaphysics with the Physics of Plato. But before we avail ourselves of this transition, it is important to say a few words of his application of the theory of ideas to the classification of the sciences, and the distribution of the human faculties. The subjective division of our nature corresponds in his view with the objective counterpart in the universe; the senses putting us in relation with the negative or phenomenal element; the intellect, with the eternal ideas. Yet his distribution is rather *threefold* than *dualistic;* for, in consequence of his assumption that like only could have dealings with like, a mediating term was introduced, both into the universe and into man, in order to unite the two extremes. We have seen from the

[1] In the passage already quoted from Phil. 22 C.

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passage in the Philebus[1] that a ψυχή was thought necessary in order to let the νοῦς pass into the phenomenal world; and so, in man, a *soul* or animating principle occupies a middle place between the simply corporeal and the purely intellectual nature. This soul is the seat, neither of mere passive sensation on the one hand, nor of reflective thought on the other; it is more than blind receptivity, less than clear intellection; and constitutes the *instinctive and impulsive life* in regard to action, and the domain of *accidental judgment* and *mother-wit*, of conjecture and ungrounded belief, in relation to matters of mental discernment. Hence the triad so constantly presented in the dialogues, of αἴσθησις, δόξα, ἐπιστήμη, in reference to the intelligent operations; and of ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, and νοῦς, in reference to the principles of action[2]: the highest term in both series, be it observed, denoting the same power, and giving preponderance to the *rational* element over the affectional. Nothing can be more curiously precise than the relation which Plato has established among the states and objects of the human understanding, in a celebrated passage of his Republic[3]. He first distinguishes between the phenomenal and the ideal world, calling the former *visible* (ὁρατόν) and the latter cogitable (νοητόν); and then divides each of these again into two domains; the visible world including (1) images, as (*a*) shadows, (*b*) reflections and such optical phenomena; (2) actual and material things (such as animals, plants, fabricated objects, &c.), to which the images correspond. The cogitable world distributes itself into the two departments of *Mathematics* and *Dialectic;* which differ from each other in both the materials they deal with, and the procedure they adopt. The materials with which the Mathematics deal are *Images* or figures: while Dialectic uses only *Ideas*. The *procedure* of the mathematics is *always* from certain assumptions (ὑποθέσεις) taken as ἀρχαί or first principles,

[1] Phil. 30 C.
[2] E.g. Rep. 439–441; 580 D, E. Tim. 69 E; 70 A. Phædr. 246.
[3] Rep. 509 D—511 E.

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down to the end (ἐπὶ τελευτήν): while that of dialectic is twofold, partly in the same direction with the mathematical, but not till after a previous investigation in the opposite. For (1) it picks up some assumptions (ὑποθέσεις) not as first principles, but merely as starting-points and steps (ἐπιβάσεις and ὁρμάς) for the investigation, and therefore distinguishable from the mathematical assumptions by being *really assumptions* (τῷ ὄντι ὑποθέσεις): and from these it reasons *upwards* to a first principle which is *not hypothetical* (ἀνυπόθετον): and having gained this prize, it then (2) proceeds *downwards* through ideas, into ideas and them alone. It is clear that by the *descending* process Plato denotes proper *deduction:* whether, in the case of mathematics, in the *analytic* or in the *synthetic* order, will depend on the nature of the *assumptions*, taken as first principles; if they are the *data* already obtained, the procedure will be *synthetic;* if they are the *quæsita*, tentatively adopted, it will be *analytic*. Since he contrasts them with *real assumptions* (i.e. assumptions in the strict sense, with no pretension to anything more) he probably means to denote such universally recognised conceptions as are found in the definitions of geometry and arithmetic, and contemplates therefore the synthetic geometry, of which these are the fundamental data. He illustrates them by examples thus:—'You know that those who occupy themselves with geometry and calculations and such studies assume the odd and even and the diagrams and three kinds of angles, and the like, in each branch: feeling quite familiar with these things, they set them up as their assumptions (ὑποθέσεις), without thinking it worth while to give any account, either to themselves or others, of matters so plain to everybody; and starting from these without more ado, they pass on through what follows coherently to the final point which they set out to determine[1].' The defect which Plato finds in this procedure evidently is, that it treats as first principles what have no claim to any higher character than assumptions. Since we are accustomed to regard the elementary

[1] Rep. 510 C.

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mathematical positions as exhibiting the perfection of 'self-evidence,' it may well be asked how he could reduce them to the rank of hypotheses, and what account he could expect them to give of themselves which would enhance their authority. The answer will be found in his estimate of the different faculties to which the several kinds of apprehended things report themselves. The clearness of geometrical and arithmetical relations is that of imagination, exercised in pictures of co-existing parts or counting of successive numbers, and is dependent on the lessons of external perception: it is too near to the senses to carry us beyond the phenomenal world. The figures with which theorems, and the notation with which calculations are worked, are only representative symbols employed to set supposed cases before the mind's eye; and whatever is proved is conditional upon an '*if*;' it emerges from an *hypothesis*. At the same time the truth which the reasoner seeks is not about these representative media, but about the things represented; 'and while he is using his visible figures and arguing upon them, his thought is intent not on them but on the originals which they copy, the absolute square and diagonal instead of this particular one which he draws: and so in all other cases. The immediate forms which he shapes and draws, and which in their turn have copies thrown off in their shadows and reflections in water, he uses as likenesses, while really trying to see the essential objects which cannot be seen except with the Understanding[1].' Thus, the instruments of the mathematician's work are empirical: his results ideal: and Plato feels a want of congruity between the beginning and the end. As distinguished from these assumptions in the disguise of ἀρχαί, the *assumptions* proper on which dialectic seizes are propositions provisionally taken for the mere purpose of investigation; some thesis as to the truth of which we wish to prosecute an enquiry: beginning thence, we begin with our *quæsitum*, and working it clear of foreign or false adhesions, we isolate its essence and trace it to its real

[1] Rep. 510 D.

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ground, narrowing the way as we proceed till we reach an *ἀρχή* in the *ἀνυπόθετον*. So far the procedure has a direction the reverse of the mathematical; which from the original assumption moves forward to its consequences, taking on new truths and so widening its field as it advances towards its termination. Here, however, the antithesis of the two methods ceases: for dialectic having ascended to its source in the *αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν*, then reverses its steps, and follows the development of the contained *εἴδη* into the relations of the actual world. Thus both the analytic ascent and the synthetic descent are effected without any recourse to sensible objects, every step from first to last being rigorously true to the consecution of ideas.

These things being premised, the proportion by which Plato expresses the relations of human knowledge will be intelligible: he says that

	ὁρατόν : *νοητόν* = images : actualities	–	mathematics :	dialectic.	
So the corresponding subjective states—	= *εἰκασία* :	*πίστις*	= *διάνοια*	: *νόησις* or *ἐπιστήμη*.	

In Rep. 601 E. & 602 A. the single word *δόξα* embraces *εἰκασία* and *πίστις*, while *νόησις* is extended to cover *διάνοια*. And in Tim. 29 C. the expression changes again, *ἀληθεία* being substituted for *ἐπιστήμη*: so that in Plato *ἀληθεία* = *ἐπιστήμη* = *νόησις* = *διαλεκτική*: and in accordance with the physical object of the Timæus, the *ὁρατόν* is there called *γένεσις* and the *νοητόν*, *οὐσία*. This system of analogies is the only attempt preserved in Plato's own writings to exhibit under a mathematical expression the degrees of certainty attaching to the several cognitive states of mind. But, according to Aristotle[1], he resorted to another, founded on his later doctrine of ideal numbers. Unfortunately, the obscurity of that doctrine is rather increased by this special application; for, besides supplying no key to his ideal numeration, it resorts to geometrical terms convertible only with arithmetical equivalents. Mind (*νοῦς*), he is reported to have

[1] De An. I. ii. 7.

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said, is one (τὸ ἕν); Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), two (τὰ δύο); Opinion (δόξα), the number of the superficies (ὁ τοῦ ἐπιπέδου ἀριθμός); Perception (αἴσθησις), that of the solid (ὁ τοῦ στερεοῦ). Here, the first two terms being numerical, and the last two geometrical, it is not easy to gain a clear conception of the quantitative symbols as a system. The most probable conjecture is, that they were originally imagined as *points*, taken as geometrical loci, and then *counted* into arithmetical expression: the single point, fixing the initial position of all possibilities; the two points, as limits of the straight line; the three, as, when united, all in the same plane; the four, as forming, when joined, the first and simplest of solids, the pyramid. But how this series, when constructed, symbolises the mental conditions severally assigned to its members, it is impossible to say; the interpreting idea which promises well for one part of the series failing to suit another. Thus Simplikius, the sixth-century commentator on the De Anima, tells us why Knowledge is represented by the straight line from point to point, viz. because it goes in no path but one to its end (μοναχῶς γὰρ ἐφ' ἕν), direct at truth, which is single. And this supplies the next term with an intelligible and consistent difference: for opinion, with its contingency of truth or falsehood, is liable to deflection, and even if it ever arrives at the right, takes circuits to it through wrong intermediate points. But this clue will guide us no further; for what other variety of judgment, besides the true and the false, remains to make up (with the judging mind) the fourth point which is brought in by sensible perception? I can think of only one plausible answer to this question. Thus far, the states which we have supposed to be described are those of *Thought* alone exercising itself upon its proper data: so long as thought is limited, it will be intrinsically subject to error as well as capable of truth, in its communion with the objects before it. But now that the Senses come in, they cut it off from direct intercourse with realities, and imprison it with mere images and shadows of them; and with this additional feature, of dealing with representations

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instead of originals, Perception is at one remove further from pure Mind than even Opinion. Simplikius here, instead of thus continuing to work out the same *fundamentum divisionis*, shifts to another, and says that Perception has 'the number of the solid,' because the objects it has to do with are solid bodies, and of these the first,—which stands for all,—is constituted by joining four points. It is clear that this in no way carries out the retreat from νοῦς: it cites a feature which might be put forward by one who placed perception on the highest instead of the lowest step of σαφήνεια. However curious this reported theory may be, it is fortunate that, as it makes no appearance in Plato's own writings, it can be left in its obscurity without seriously impairing our legitimate Impressions of his philosophy[1].

§ 3. *Positive and Negative Factors of the Cosmos.*

From the sketch which has been given of Plato's doctrine of Ideas, it will be evident that its function was to mediate between man as knower and the universe as known; to supply a middle term between the mutable and the absolute; to give a nucleus of unity to phenomena, and to the real a principle of plurality. And the close connection will be immediately understood between the *dialectic* of Plato and his *physics;* the first exhibiting the process by which we untwine the transient and accidental from our thought till we contemplate the essential ground of the universe; the other showing how, in the first instance, naked eternities clothed themselves with the transient conditions of relative appearance, and came on to the decorated stage of sense: each therefore being but the other read backwards. Accordingly, the difficulty which we have encountered already, of establishing a clear relation between the ideal and the phenomenal world, recurs in the physics and cosmogony of Plato.

[1] See Platonis de Ideis et Numeris Doctrina ex Aristotele illustrata. Frid. Adolph Trendelenburg. Lips. 1826. And Christ. Aug. Brandis De Perditis Aristotelis Libris de Ideis et de Bono. Bonnæ. 1826.

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We can approximately understand his description of the eternal εἴδη, as the primitive types of being, alone possessing reality and constituting the essence of whatever exists; can think of them as given forms, inherently without motion or susceptibility of change, so that their presence may explain the permanent and self-identical in things, but not the various and transient; and can allow to their highest term,—the Idea of the Good,—an exceptional causal spontaneity and active power, capable of putting in motion all the rest. But, all this while, we remain wholly in the ideal world; and we want the means of passing thence into the sphere of phenomena. Whence comes all that is *not* εἶδος in the objects of sensible experience? How do transiency and admixture join themselves to essences intrinsically unsusceptible of them? Wherein consists the *genesis* of what for ever *is?* In order to resolve these questions, Plato balances the εἴδη with an element wholly opposed to them, which he places on the other side of their supreme Disposer, as the condition or material of their manifestation. Whatever predicate belongs to them is to be denied of this opposite datum: as they are all rest, it is all motion: as they are self-identical, it is *all else:* as they are determinate, it is formless and indeterminate: as they have all existence, it has *no existence:* as they are rational essences, it is all *blind necessity.* This boundless realm, being the antithetic term to the only positive being, is described, as far as possible, by negatives; and Plato endeavours to escape the necessity of admitting its reality side by side with the εἴδη, by treating it merely as their negation, and as having no tenure of being except as their contradictory. In the same way as Space is unreal and indefinite itself, yet the condition of whatever is definite and real, so is this immeasurable chaotic sea of *non-being* the condition of all distinctive being. The logical law, that we can think of nothing except by cutting it off from the circumambient sphere of *all else*, that to posit one thing is to exclude and therefore to deal with and recognise an indeterminate residue, Plato employs as a cosmical principle.

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He gives it both quantitative and qualitative expression; the former in the Philebus, where the origination of things is imagined to take place by the blending of *Measure* (πέρας) with the immeasurable (ἄπειρον), so as to yield, by mechanical mixture of figure and number with formless material, definite properties and relations of magnitude[1]: the latter in the Timæus, where the same process is conceived rather as a merging of the indivisible ideals into a compound with the indeterminate divisible material, so as to mark out this or that same essence amid an *infinite other than this*[2]. Each of these views supplies terms in which to describe the two opposites, viz. the blind and negative element (τὸ μὴ ὄν) on the one hand; and the seeing or intellectual element (νοῦς) on the other. The cosmical function ascribed to the blind infinitude as indispensable to the genesis of things is incompatible with the purely negative character within which Plato endeavours to restrain it; and in spite of every effort it passes into a sort of matter, present as a datum prior to creation, and performing a part in that process not less than the εἴδη which owe to it their manifestation: and the system, without intending it, becomes in effect a dualistic scheme evolving the universe from the co-operation of matter and mind. Or, to express the same criticism in other words, Plato's τὸ μὴ ὄν is by no means tantamount to absolute non-existence[3], but has still something objective in it, so as to be the condition of effects which would not otherwise arise. It is rather an infinite *indeterminate somewhat* which he sets as the background to all real and determinate existence, and whose necessity he vindicates very nearly as Hegel asserts the identity of his Nicht-seyn and Seyn, being only an Anders-seyn as opposed to Etwas, and in general treats every negative not as the denial, but as the differentiation of the positive. In this chaotic realm then lie the rudiments of the material world, but without form or distinction. In the heavenly space, on the other hand, are the uncreated types

[1] E.g. Phil. 25 D, E. [2] E.g. Tim. 35 A; 37 A.
[3] Soph. 237 C—239 B.

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of thought, clear and perfect, but without active power. The causal power, however, is found in the supreme intellect or God, Himself designated sometimes as the highest εἶδος, or the very Good (αὐτὸ τὸ ἀγαθόν[1]). By Him the blind waste of Necessity is *persuaded* to receive the εἴδη[2], and so allow the essences of things to embody themselves and arise; and thus He becomes a true Creator, with *poetic* function (ποιητής) as disposer of the ideas,—with *demiurgic* (δημιουργός) as prevailing over matter to accept them[3]. The execution of this work was impossible without some middle principle to bring the two extremes into approximation; and since mathematical relations are regarded by Plato as the middle term between the spheres of Sense and of Thought, the Creator resorts to these, and in conformity with them first blends the two elements into a living principle or universal soul[4]. This ψυχή of nature is the centre and meeting-point of the intellectual and the corporeal; the prior condition and the inner principle of the whole organic development of the universe. Stress is laid on the position, that God created the soul *not later* than the body of the world, but *earlier*, to be its empress and ruler from the first; and spread her presence co-extensively with the universe, to revolve for ever in herself and bear the system with her, and be its eternal and self-conscious life[5]. Next to the production of this soul of the world, the Creator distributes the indeterminate mass into the five fundamental elements, each distinguished by the geometric forms of which it is composed, viz. earth, by the cube; fire, by the pyramid; air, by the octahedron; water, by the icosahedron; ether, by the dodecahedron; and by accommodating these to the harmonious relations of the universal soul, he frames the system of the spheres[6]. In their concentric circles are set the stars as chronometers, and as receptacles each of a divine eternal essence[7]. The form thus given to the universe is the best

[1] Rep. 379 B, C. Conf. 508 E.
[2] Tim. 48 A.
[3] Phil. 27 A. Tim. 28 C. Rep. 596 C, D.
[4] Tim. 31 E; 35 A.
[5] Ib. 34 E; 36 E.
[6] Ib. 55 E—56 C.
[7] Ib 30 B; 38 C, D; 40 B.

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possible, the most expressive of the divine nature itself,—the spherical; and the motion imparted to the vault of the fixed stars is that which is alone self-uniform and self-identical. In both respects God frames what bears the nearest possible resemblance to Himself; for He is good, and goodness *grudges nothing;* and determines freely to impart Himself, and frame a system copying into it all His communicable perfection. It is in this sense that Plato speaks of the world as the product of the divine *ungrudgingness;* and of God as the *measure and standard of all things* [1]. The universe thus constituted is a living and animated nature (ἔμψυχον ζῶον), nay, a blessed God (εὐδαίμων θεός)[2]: having all material things as part of its body, and an imperishable life in virtue of its participation in the divine intellect: incapable therefore of growing old and perishing, though the constant scene of phenomena: needing no eyes or limbs, because having nothing external to itself; and in all respects a transcript as perfect as anything originated can be, of the self-living (αὐτόζωον), invisible, and absolutely good Deity [3]. This notion, of an unavoidable evil of imperfection in all created things, of a *limit of possibility* beyond which the resemblance of the copy to the divine ideal could not be carried, is frequent with Plato; and the seat and source of this negative restraint he undoubtedly finds in the unmanageable character of the material (called by Aristotle the ὕλη) which cannot but affect the εἴδη with a portion of its own non-existence and hinder their phenomenal realisation. It was this inertia in the chaotic realm that led him to call it the sphere of Necessity, and to contrast it sharply with the free spontaneity of Mind, on whose action it put a drag [4]. And it was with the same feeling that he insisted with the greatest emphasis on the distinction which the philosophy of our own time abolishes, between a proper *Cause* (αἰτία) and a mere *Condition* (συναιτία); claiming causality exclusively for Mind, and

[1] Tim. 34 A; 29 E. Comp. Phædrus, 247 A. φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θείου χοροῦ ἕσταται.
[2] Tim. 68 E; 34 D. [3] Tim. 33. 29 E. [4] Tim. 48 A.

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discriminating material nature as that without which a cause could not exercise its causality[1].

It is a rule in Plato's cosmogony, that the Demiurgus himself forms whatever is to be immortal in the universe, but consigns the production of all that is perishable to the created divinities[2]. When the general structure of the world is completed, and the stars have been furnished with their godlike natures, and the origination of man is taken in hand, the created divinities fabricate the human body and the mortal part of the soul, while God himself provides its immortal element, compounding it in the same vessel in which the general soul of the universe had been before prepared, and by the same rules, only with a result less pure[3]. In man, as in the universe, the soul is the uniting term between the rational and the phenomenal sphere, between thought and sense. Without it, thought would have no life and movement; and movement would have no thought: its essence unites the two ideas, *to think*, and *to live*, and can never admit the opposite of either. Hence it is incapable of death[4]: it so partakes of the causal spontaneity of the originating intellect, as to be a self-moving principle, having its action from within, and not contingent on external commencement or arrest; consequently, without beginning and without end. However strange and precarious may seem to us the dependence of a doctrine of immortality upon that of the pre-existence of the soul, the two notions are inseparable and indeed

[1] Tim. 46 C—E; 68 E. Phil. 27 A.
[2] Tim. 42 E; 69 B, C.
[3] Ib. 41 C—E.
[4] Phædo, 105 C—106 D. This argument, in proof of the essential and inherent immortality of the soul, is hardly consistent with the doctrine of the Timæus, 41 A, where the Creator, addressing the created divinities, tells them that all which is created is subject to dissolution, and that their own exemption from it is *contingent upon His will*: 'Whatever is compacted is dissoluble, though none but an evil being would choose to dissolve what is well adjusted and right. Hence, although as created you are not wholly immortal and indissoluble, you shall be quite untouched by dissolution and exempt from the fate of death; having in my will a bond greater and more availing than those which were fastened on you at your creation.' If this applied to the created divinities, *a fortiori* it applied to the human race which they were commissioned to call into being.

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identical in the philosophy of Plato. His reasoning on the subject assumes, throughout, the division of all objects of thought into two classes,—one comprising whatever *is* and never *passes* in and out,—the other, what always passes in and out and never *is*: and his only question is, to which of these two, judging by its essence and characteristics, does the soul belong? Grant this fundamental principle of classification, allow that all genesis of visible things is due to composition of the eternal with the evanescent, and the proofs which the Phædo urges of the soul's immortality will lose their fanciful aspect, and the reason will be appreciated why they are so framed as to claim a life before as well as after this. Not indeed that Plato is content with showing the soul to be no *function of the body*, and claiming for it a place in the *non-evanescent* part of man[1]; for this would only establish the perpetual being of the soul in the same sense in which every εἶδος,—(that, e.g. of tree or water) is eternal. The vital point is, not whether the soul is an εἶδος, so as always *to be*, but what *sort of an* εἶδος *it is*, and whether among its predicates the special ones of *life* and of *self-movement*, as well as the general one of *existence*, are to be found[2]. Plato decides that it belongs to the very essence of this *Kind* to live; and if its opposite, Death, approaches, to get out of its way and decline to admit it; else, it would lose its self-identity and become another εἶδος; which is absurd, as ascribing genesis to τὸ ἀεὶ ὄν. To this belief in the uncreated and imperishable nature of the soul Plato adheres with such evident earnestness, that we must interpret in harmony with it the mythical account in the Timæus of the formation of souls by the Creator[3]. Nor is this difficult; for as the word ψυχή always expresses a step at one remove from pure νοῦς,—and denotes *thought in a condition to appear*,—the first

[1] This is done in refuting the hypothesis that the soul is 'a harmony' (function of a material instrument), Phædo 93 seqq. The ideal argument follows.

[2] Phædr. 245 C—E; conf. Legg. 896 A, where Plato calls τὴν δυναμένην αὐτὴν αὑτὴν κινεῖν κίνησιν the constituting essence of ψυχή.

[3] Tim. 41 D.

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creation of souls in the Timæus may be understood to mark only their being introduced upon the stage of the universe. The Creator, it is said, formed as many souls at first as there are stars, on each of which, as on a chariot, He planted one, to watch from that heavenly station the divine order of things; but, after a time, to be born into a human corporeal life. According to the earlier doctrine of the Phædrus, this fate is the consequence of a lapse already from the destined blessedness of that starry existence: so that men are, universally, heavenly natures, fallen from their sphere[1]. But, according to the Timæus, the consignment to a human lot is in virtue of a general law, and the souls do not begin their probation till the mortal birth[2]. The Greek estimate of the sexes betrays itself in the statement that on the first trial the souls are permitted to be *men*. If they conquer the tendencies of Sense and vindicate their higher nature, they return at each interval to their stars, and remain a thousand years free from the body among the choir of the gods. If otherwise, they are born the second time as women; and if again unfaithful, they are degraded the third time to the life of brutes; nor will this circulation cease, till by subjection of the lower nature they have found their way back to their original perfection. Between the different lives, however, is interposed in every case not merely a judgment upon the previous probation, but a period of a thousand years, spent in a journey of merited suffering or blessedness; and not till after that are they called to choose another life[3]. From this return to the earth there are only two exceptions: the incorrigibly guilty are denied all further opportunity, and given over to eternal retribution[4]: and, on the other hand, those who during three successive lives have devoted themselves to philosophy and been distinguished for sanctity, are finally replaced, after the third millennium, in their celestial abode, and troubled no more with a corporeal existence[5].

[1] Phædr. 248 C. [2] Tim. 42 B, C. [3] Rep. 615 A.
[4] Rep. 615 D. [5] Phædr. 249 A. Conf. however Tim. 42 B.

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From this conception of the soul, as a divine nature submitted to the conditions of an undivine life, and for this end united with perishable elements, Plato's division of its powers will be readily understood. The leading distinction between its immortal and its mortal part is expressed by the words Reason and Sense; and illustrated by comparison with the sea-god Glaucus, of whom sailors and fishermen caught glimpses beneath the green waters, as he yearly visited the coasts[1]. No one, to look at him, would suspect the immortal nature shrouded in such a form; disfigured by shell-fish and sea-weed and pebbles clinging to him, he might be taken for a monster rather than a god; and only those who know how he can prophesy and will fulfil his oracles find out what he really is. So do the adhesive entanglements of sense and passion grow around the soul, and cover her with an earthy mass so dense and wild, that her primitive divine nature is unperceived; but if you only notice the insight she can show into the true and good, and the converse she aspires to with the god-like and immortal, you may imagine what she would be if surrounded by these alone, and how she would appear if lifted out of the gulf in which her life is plunged, and with the unsightly accretions all struck off. The immortal part of the soul is simple and uncompounded; but the other is composed of a nobler and a less noble part, of which the higher,—ὁ θυμὸς,—*impulse*, or *energy of Will*, mediates between the extremes of Intellect and Sense; and the lower,—ἐπιθυμητικὸν or φιλοχρήματον,—*appetite*, or selfish desire of *having* rather than of *being*, is in complete opposition to reason, and through the force of the intervening θυμός to be kept in rightful subordination to it[2]. This threefold distribution of the soul on the practical side corresponds with the triad already noticed on the cognitive: *desire* bearing the same inferior relation to *virtue* that *perception* does to *knowledge:* while mere *vigour* of character (θυμοειδὲς), terminating

[1] Rep. 611 C. seqq.
[2] Ib. 435 B; 449 E; 441 C; 580 D, E.

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in *good habits*, is as far above appetite and beneath sanctity as good sense, terminating in correct but ungrounded impressions, is more than perception and less than reason: and the topmost term is νοῦς in both. The body of man itself is built in three stories, to lodge these three inhabitants at their appropriate elevations: the immortal Reason in the 'Acropolis' of the uplifted head, scarcely deigning to be united with the rest by the narrow isthmus of the neck: and, of the mortal parts which divide the proper *corpus* between them, the brave energies find themselves at home in the beating heart and panting lungs; while the mere appetencies occupy the basement beneath the diaphragm, and by their low position confess a natural servitude and liability to shame[1]. These three components of the soul are differently mixed in different men and nations; the higher always carrying with it and comprehending the lower, but the lower not implying the higher. The trading nations,—the Egyptians and Phœnicians,—are distinguished by the predominance of Desire; the northern barbarians, of Force of character; the Greeks, of Intellect[2]. This last alone is exclusively human; for the brutes are not without the courageous nature; or the plants without a share of instinctive appetency.

§ 4. *Conceptions of Character.*

This threefold nature of man's soul on the one hand belongs to its very composition, and on the other prescribes its appointed work; and forms the transition therefore from the Physics to the proper Ethics of Plato. The origin and formation of man as an element of the universe determines what it is possible and well for him to aim at: to define his moral destination, his position and the factors of his life must be appreciated. This order of derivation, by which the doctrine of human character is deduced not from direct interpretation of the moral sentiments but from the consideration

[1] Tim. 69 C—70 A; 90 A, B.
[2] Rep. 435 E.

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of man as a natural object placed and constituted in a certain way, is the characteristic of the ancient Ethics. Accordingly, the notion of *Duty* retreats with them into the background; and in its place they investigate the *Highest Good*, a more comprehensive object, including, along with Morality, Beauty also and Wisdom, a combination which, though fitted to dignify and adorn it, misses its peculiar and paramount *authority*, and changes it from a matter of universal obligation into the monopoly of philosophers. Plato's highest good being, as we have seen, identical with *intellect* as opposed to *sense*, his conception of perfect life assumes either of two forms, according as he reasons from the lower or from the upper end of our nature as his datum. Are we entangled in the delusions and fascinations of Sense? we must clear ourselves from them, learn to converse with ideas, subjugate the body, and welcome death as an emancipation from the last hindrance of our wisdom. Are we sharers in that divine Reason which informs and organises the universe? we must recognise and welcome it everywhere, and follow it out as it ramifies through the world of sense, and touches pleasure itself with a light of beauty. There is nothing inconsistent in this double view, which regards the material system, now as the opaque veil to hide, and now as the transparent medium to reveal, the inner thought which is the divine essence of all; and seeks at one time to ascend into the intellectual glory by escape from detaining appearances; at another, to descend with that glory as it streams into the remotest recesses of the phenomenal world. But without reference to this negative and positive side of the same doctrine, the opposite aspects of Plato's ethical delineation would present the appearance of contradiction. At one time, in his polemic against the claims of pleasure, he appears to advocate an ascetic contempt for the senses, and to enjoin a cold separation from human affairs, for the sake of attaining a state of intellectual perfection[1]. At another, he denounces the life

[1] See e.g. Phædo 64–68. Theæt. 173 C—E; 176 A. Rep. 347 B—D; 519, 520.

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without pleasure and pain as a miserable apathy, and contending that the idea of the good distributes itself through all the elements of existence, protests against its being ignored even in the sphere of perception; stipulating only for a careful distinction of worthy from unworthy pleasure, for the ascendency of *measure* and the recognition of *beauty* in all[1]. Under this positive aspect of his doctrine, he finds a function for parts and expressions of human nature which asceticism is most apt to persecute and suppress. Art, specially music, is with him an indispensable element of culture[2]. And Love, in its various stages of impulse from the lowest to the highest, he recognises as the sigh of the mortal after the immortal, the tendency of the finite back to the infinite, showing itself first in a fascination with beautiful form,—a single form to begin with, then with all; next, in a passion for beautiful souls, and the creation by interchange with them of noble thoughts and endeavours; then, in the aspiration after the symmetry and grandeur of intellectual truth, wherever science may have seized it; and finally, in the aim to reach the divine eternal beauty, in which love dies from having realised its quest[3]. By a graceful and happy myth, Plato describes this yearning impulse, that runs through the whole action of the mind, as a joint product of the poverty and affluence of the soul, expressing by features at once of sadness and of hope, the influence of want and of possession; *Eros* is the child of *Penia* and *Poros*. Nor does he leave it doubtful what *kind* of possession it is to which this yearning owes its life; for Poros again is the child of *Metis*; so that we *have* nothing and can sigh for nothing but what is born of divine wisdom and inherits a spiritual nature[4]. In this representation, carried out with the most exquisite grace in the Symposium, and under severer limits in the latter

[1] See e.g. Phil. 28 A; 60 E; 63 E; 64 C. Symp. 206 B; 215 D.
[2] Legg. 654 seqq.; 660 A. Rep. 398 C. seqq.
[3] Symp. 201 D—212 A. [4] Ib 203 B, C.

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part of the Philebus[1], it is evident how much beyond the range of an ascetic doctrine was Plato's conception of the highest human good. The leading features of this more comprehensive notion must be taken with us into the study of his idea of virtue, as unfolded in his Republic.

In the Platonic notion of virtue, no distinction is observed between voluntary and involuntary qualities, natural propensities and acquired tendencies. A soul happily constituted and healthily acting out its proper destination is virtuous, whether its harmony be the result of native aptitude or of self-imposed discipline. Virtue is that action of the soul by which it tends towards the highest good, and realises so much of it as its faculties allow. How much that is depends on the essence of the soul, which is the same in all, and on the temperament and proportion of its component parts, which are liable to differ in each. The three elementary endowments, Reason, Impulse, Appetite, have their several perfections or best conditions; and so supply us with three fundamental virtues; Wisdom, as the expression of Reason: Courage, regulated by a just conception of the proper objects of fear, as the acme of Impulse: and Moderation, or Self-restraint, as the excellence which gives an ethical character to Appetite. These so far follow the order of rank and relation subsisting among the faculties corresponding with them, that Courage is higher than Self-restraint, and Wisdom as the highest virtue comprehends the rest. While Plato's ethical arrangement is thus made to rest on a psychological base, and not upon any considerations of the external objects and occasions of duty, a remarkable difference is observable between his earlier and his maturer writings in the function assigned to Intellect and its virtue of Wisdom. According to the Phædrus[2] the soul, resembling in its composition a chariot and its driver, has Courage and Appetite for its steeds, and Reason for its charioteer; and the difficulty of directing its course arises

[1] Philebus 65 D—66 A. [2] Phædr. 246 B; 247 B

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in our case from this; that while beings diviner than we have not only the reins in the hand of perfect skill, but horses of best descent and mettle, ours are ill yoked together, one being good and noble, the other just the opposite; the one akin to the living soul of all, and tending upwards on the wing to catch glimpses of its native heaven; the other, without plumage to sustain it, and always wanting to sink safely home into the rest of bodily existence. The function of the wing is to bear the heavy aloft into the abode of the gods,—the place beyond the heavens, which no poet has ever sung or can sing,—the formless, incorporeal, colourless realm where the essences of thought and justice dwell, and the divine steeds may pasture and grow their plumage on the wise, the beautiful, the good, which are the food alike of gods and men. Once gain that region, and the wings will have new breadth and power: miss it and take inferior aliment, and they become thin and waste away. When the great Lord of heaven leads out with his winged chariot, he is followed by the troop of gods and spirits, disposed by his order in eleven trains; and as they make the round of the lower heavenly vault, whoever can and will may join the procession and survey the glories in whose neighbourhood it sweeps. But at last comes the time when the godlike race that leads the way goes to the banquet prepared for them beyond the margin of the lower heaven, and the rim is reached which only the spirits of strong pinion can pass. Here then occurs the grand struggle of the soul: while the gods have easily reached the inner meadows of eternal truth, and turned out their horses to pasture on ambrosia and drink of nectar, even the immortal power of the human soul pushes on with difficulty to the near edge of that upper heaven. A few may so far prevail as to stand just clear above the margin, and look round through the divine space and admire the beauties and sanctities it contains. Others get their head just through, and have a brief chance of gazing round; but have so much trouble with their steeds, that they have scarce time to look. There are more who

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push for an instant through, but are plunged down again by their refractory steeds, so as to see a little, but miss the most. Below and behind these comes the throng of incapable drivers and stubborn horses, whose sole proof of nobleness is in a vain wish to follow, and who do but jostle and trample one another, and with strife and wrangling hurt a vast deal of plumage, and after all lose the entire vision of divine realities.

In this celebrated myth, it will be observed that Reason is the charioteer, and is thus not co-ordinated with the steeds, which represent the parts of the soul, but set above them on a different level. In the Republic the same three principles re-appear: high spirit maintains its place as distinct from appetency, and as the subordinate ally of reason; to which, as the superior of both, the care and direction of the soul is frequently referred [1]. But in reproducing this system of relations Plato becomes conscious that it is not self-sustaining and complete. The right movement and condition of the soul may still be insecure, though no desire overrides and suppresses another, and high spirit never dares too little or too much, and reason keeps her insight always clear. For, each of these, however well ordered in itself, may occupy too large a place within the soul, and impair the functions of the rest; and then they will quarrel among themselves; and some umpire is needed, with authority to keep the associates in harmony and prevent the intermeddling of any one with the business of another. As, in the constitution of a healthy state, there must be a due proportion of workers for industrial wants, and soldiers for defence, and of guardians for governing; so, in the individual nature, must the propensions, the impulsive energies, and the reflective reason be held to their respective places by some controlling influence embracing all [2]. From this obvious need the proper conclusion would be, that the three principles must be supplemented by a fourth, which might indeed, like the rest, be separately

[1] Rep. 441 E; 442 C. [2] Ib. 433, 434.

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named as 'a part' of the soul, but which, by its dominance over the rest, would in fact be identical with the voluntary personality itself. No such conclusion does Plato overtly draw. Had he drawn it, and had he readjusted to it the Phædrus myth, the chariot would have been a triga instead of a biga, and the reins would have been delivered into the hands of another power. Though this implied fourth power, which imposes their proper bounds upon the rest, is left without a name, a clue to it is indirectly given; for, just as in the other cases, its best state constitutes a special virtue; which, accordingly, is added to the triad,—wisdom, courage, and self-restraint,—and is set over it to ensure the harmony of the whole. And this new-comer is introduced with emphasis and by name; it is *Justice* or *Right*[1]. May we not then ask, what is that power of the soul of which this is the perfect expression, as self-restraint is of appetite, and courage of high spirit, and wisdom of reason? If from the fourfold ethical division we may complete a fourfold psychology, what faculty can we name as having Justice or Right as its manifestation, if it be not *Conscience* or the proper *Moral Faculty*[2]? May not Plato have felt that Intellect, as such, could not after all be put upon the seat of guidance, but must itself be made available in the career of life, by a power over it, resolved to lash it to its work[3]? It is certainly remarkable that Plato, who first, so far as I know, introduced the Greek enumeration of four cardinal virtues, does not co-ordinate them, but treats δικαιοσύνη as empress of the rest,—the bond of unity which combines them into a moral system, and obliges them to keep their place. The comprehensive supervision exercised by this principle of Right is otherwise expressed by Plato, when he says that

[1] Rep. 432 B; 435 B.
[2] Ib. 441 D; 443 D—444 B.
[3] I do not mean that Plato withdrew νοῦς from its supreme position in favour of a new and fourth term; but only that into his conception of νοῦς he imported a new function, of right-direction, not merely over other powers, but including also self-direction, and making insight itself the servant of Right.

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the individual soul is too small a sphere for its activity; that, ruling as it does the whole moral life of man and gathering into its hand all the threads of ethical relation, it can be studied as a whole only on the scale of the State, where its universality has full scope, and its features and administration are seen magnified. Where can be found a finer description of the office of Conscience than this?—'And such (i.e. holding every function to its place) is Right in its real essence: concerning itself, however, not with the outward doings of a man's affections, but with the inward springs which are his true self and life; forbidding each to quit its own field, in meddlesome encroachment on other elements of the soul: but when, by setting all in the order of their own real limits, he has attained self-mastery and self-disposal, with the fruits of peace within; and has attuned to concord his three principles just like the three notes, highest, lowest, and middle of a scale, with any intermediates there may be:—then, when he has woven all these threads into a web, and become no longer manifold in character, but one compact and balanced nature, he is at last prepared so to act, be it in affairs of property or health or politics or private contract, as to think and call that conduct *right and good* which concurs with this character and upholds it, and that knowledge which directs it *Wisdom*: and on the other hand, that conduct *wrong* which may ever impair it, and that judgment *Ignorance* which directs such conduct[1].'

In the maturity of his philosophy, then, Plato conceived of a plurality of virtues brought into unity by an organising sense of Right. In his earlier years he had rather held by the Socratic formula, that all virtue is one; that its plurality is nominal and deceptive; and that it is *capable of being taught*. The later doctrine is not a contradiction, but a development of the earlier. For, in judging of this, we must remember the peculiarity of Socrates' idea of *teaching* as the art (illustrated by his standing comparison of it with

[1] Rep. 443 C—E.

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midwifery[1]), not of *depositing information* upon the mind, but of *evolving the contents of its own latent consciousness*[2]. That virtue may be taught meant that, by simply interrogating the soul and making it fetch out its thoughts into the light, you may cause men to see and feel the right; and that, if ever they seem to prefer the wrong, it is from the undeveloped state of their moral insight. Really to *see the good*, and to know it as such, yet not to love and pursue it, is impossible; the vision carries with it its own persuasion and authority; and the vision is so far *one and single*, that either all is seen, or nothing with any clearness; and it is the character of the luminous soul to grow pure and good in all its dimensions at once; and it is only the unreal and imitative virtue of mere habit and happy usage, that makes it seem as though goodness could be broken into fragments and be turned up piecemeal. This gives the true meaning to the celebrated saying, that *no one is voluntarily bad*[3], and that all moral aberrations are reducible to mental blindness and mistake. This maxim, by a curious fate, has become characteristic alike of the systems of Plato and of Bentham; and there are passages in which it presents the momentary appearance of announcing the same thought in both: yet assuredly it is the symbol with Bentham of the doctrine (of the supremacy of pleasure and pain) to which Plato everywhere manifests the intensest repugnance[4]. When Bentham says, that wrong-doing is nothing but false reckoning, he means, 'Show the perpetrators how much more advantage they would have in another course, and they will not repeat the ill.' With Plato it means, 'Make them feel how much better they would be with other preferences, and this new light will change their soul.' In the one case, the rule expresses the all-conquering power of external consequences; in the other, the subduing suasion of moral

[1] Theæt. 150 B. seqq. [2] Meno 82–86.
[3] Prot. 345 D, E. Tim. 86 D. Gorg. 509 E. Legg. 731 C.
[4] Gorg. 497 D; 500 A. *τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄρα ἕνεκα δεῖ καὶ τἆλλα καὶ τὰ ἡδέα πράττειν, ἀλλ' οὐ τἀγαθὰ τῶν ἡδέων.* Cf. 506 C—E.

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beauty and intrinsic worth [1]. As if to put in the strongest light the contrast between the conceptions which have both taken refuge in this same maxim, Plato has emphatically condemned, as among the worst of all, two forms of conduct which Bentham treats, in the one case with leniency, in the other with commendation: viz. delinquency through ignorance, and obedience for the sake of its rewards. Of the former he declares that ignorance and unconsciousness, far from palliating the wrong, are just what constitute its badness; and that if evil must be perpetrated at all, it is better, were it possible, that it should be done intentionally and with open eyes, than without purpose; for when you tell to others a conscious falsehood, you deceive but *them;* when an unconscious, you deceive yourself as well, and shut out the truth at every door [2]. And as to the latter, Plato denies all character of goodness to actions done for the sake of extrinsic benefits, whether in this life or in any other [3]: if you dare a little today from the prospect otherwise of greater terror to-morrow, your very bravery expresses only fear: if you refrain from indulgence now, that you may have a richer banquet hereafter, your very moderation is but greediness: and *that* can be no true virtue which thus illicitly sets its heart on the very things it professes to renounce, and secretly worships the idols it dethrones; but a mere slavish counterfeit of genuine goodness, whose attribute it is to stipulate for no wages to personal appetite or desire, but accept the intrinsically good for its own sake as the sterling coin for which all else may fairly be exchanged away. Instead of regarding moral evil as deplorable chiefly on account of the natural suffering which it brings, so that guilt would be guilt no more, could the entail of its consequences be cut off, Plato affirms that impunity is a more dreadful curse than any punishment, and that nothing so good can befall the criminal as his retribution, the failure of which would but make a

[1] Rep. 589 C—E. [2] Hipp. Min. 373 seqq. Rep. 535 E.
[3] Rep. 362 E. seqq. Cf. 445, 612 A, B.

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double discord on the order of the universe[1]. The offender himself may spend his arts in devices of escape, and think himself happy if he is not found out, or is easily let off; but all this plotting is but part of the delusion of his sin; and when he comes to himself and sees his transgression as it really is, he will yield himself up as the prisoner of eternal justice, and know that it is good for him to be afflicted, and so, for the first time, to be set at one with truth[2].

The identification of virtue with insight may perhaps remind us of Carlyle's favourite dogma, that stupidity and wickedness invariably go together; and that clear intelligence carries with it moral nobleness. Yet, as in the case of Bentham, the agreement of the ancient with the modern thinker is only apparent. At least, whatever it be that Carlyle understands by intellect, it certainly does not agree with Plato's notion: for that very '*Unconsciousness*' which the former pronounces to be a characteristic of genius is just what the latter deprecates as ignorance, and tolerates only as the prelude to awakened wisdom. The fundamental aim of the Socratic school was to carry into every field of thought and action that entire self-knowledge and open-eyed reflection which Carlyle denounced as a disease; and to banish the instinctive spontaneity the loss of which he so pathetically bewailed[3]. Plato put no trust in mere natural sagacity and sound moral health, except as the rudiments of ulterior distinctness of vision[4]: right to-day, they might be wrong to-morrow, like the tact of an ill-taught physician, or the quick-sightedness of a pilot in a strange sea: nor could *mother-wit* afford any permanent security, till brought to a conscious and systematic apprehension of the real grounds of truth and good, and capable of stating them to itself and others[5]. Without this, right judgment depends too much on happy accidents of bodily condition and favouring circumstances; and accordingly no souls, says Plato, so often

[1] Gorg. 472 E; 509 B; 511 A. [2] Ib. 476, 525 B.
[3] Apol. 22; Rep. 475 E—480. Cf. Meno, 99 B—D.
[4] Meno, 97. [5] Symp. 202 A. Rep. 506 C. Tim. 51 D, E.

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choose their second probationary life amiss as those who have passed through the first in constitutional rather than philosophical virtue[1]; insomuch that they run the chance, by successive errors of transmigration, of getting down at last to the life of bees or ants. In this satire, I admit, he has in view not altogether Carlyle's class of *unconscious* heroes, of strong and healthy instinct, but rather the regular folks of decent habit, whose virtue is scarcely less a mere organised routine than the orderly ways of some colony of constructive insects[2]. Plato, however, makes little distinction between the two classes; and charges upon both the cardinal fault of a *blind* unconsciousness towards themselves.

§ 5. *The Ideal State.*

The unity of all the virtues being found in Justice, the definition of justice involves the whole theory of morals. It is to investigate this that Plato institutes his enquiry into the nature and proper constitution of a State: which, as a magnified personality, giving at once an enlarged image of the individual, and a miniature of the universe, presents ethical relations in the external form and on the middle scale most suited to our apprehension[3]. This mode of introducing his Republic sufficiently proves that Plato regarded the State as an expression of the *moral life* of man, and not as a mere mutual assurance company: and makes it certain that he was only ridiculing a current theory and not stating seriously his own, when he assigns, as the adequate cause of human society, the mere inability of mankind otherwise to provide for their bodily support and enjoyment, and pretends to regret the development which has removed it from the primitive rudeness of a city of pigs[4]. The treatise, however, though professedly aiming at an ethical end, really stops short with the mechanism adapted for reaching it. It is a treatise on political philosophy, rather than on morals; and the reduction of the great picture into the

[1] Rep. 519 C.
[2] Phædo 69 A—C.
[3] Rep. 368, 369 A.
[4] Ib. 372 D.

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cabinet size of the individual soul is left to be accomplished, for the most part, by the optical instruments of the reader's own mind. In truth, these two branches of human study were to a Greek entirely inseparable; the scope of private life bearing a much smaller proportion than with us to the whole, and the commonwealth presenting as it did the highest and largest sphere for the exercise of character. It is surprising that any one who has the least appreciation of Plato's philosophy should suppose him to be amusing himself with a mere chimerical vision, in the delineation of his imaginary State. The picture is drawn in deep earnest; and when he speaks of it as little likely to be realised on earth, he no more intends to resign it to the realm of fancy than the moralist and the prophet mean to abate the claims of divine law when, in proclaiming its sanctity, they deplore the shortcomings of human weakness. It is not a dream, unless every ideal is a dream, but the real standard of which all actual social constitutions are but shadows and distortions, and to which, in proportion as wisdom can find opportunity, approximation should be continually made. He computes throughout the difficulties which must oppose themselves to its realisation, and allows for them; he provides a mechanism for conquering or charming them away; and deals with them as his Demiurgos is said to deal with the refractory and negative elements of nature,—not as discouragements from the act of creation, but as ground for ceaseless striving after a type too perfect for empirical exhibition. However hard we may find it to believe this respecting a system which in several points so seriously offends our moral sentiments, by giving sanction to regulated lying, to community of wives and exposure of infants, it will be found that even these revolting suggestions are products of an earnest moral idea,—of the unconditional self-sacrifice of the individual to the state, of the part to the whole. With that feeble and dilute conception of *personality* which marks every Pantheistic philosophy, Plato, in common with all the great Hellenic thinkers, regarded particular persons

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as mere *organs* of a common social life, which, as the higher and more real unity, was entitled to multiply or suppress them, to move and mould them, according to the exigencies of its perfection. Once allow that the universe is a struggle of divine thought and beauty to express itself by conquering negation and difficulty; that society is to be the copy and counterpart of the idea and method of the universe; and the individual again to be the reproduction of society in little; and it follows that the macrocosm is entitled to dispose of the microcosm; that natural beauty and perfection must determine the personal and ethical; and that the individual can acquire no rights and plead no duties against the universal. The unrelenting rigour with which the Republic carries out this idea constitutes its great value; and while inevitably producing details repugnant to feelings that start from the opposite end, attests the unshrinking earnestness of the author. With this general remark I must be almost content in dealing with a subject too large for more special criticism. The outline of Plato's construction of his ideal society is well known. As the universe is a triad of Intellect, Soul, and Matter; and as the individual man is composed of Reason, Impulse, and Sense; so the commonwealth must be constituted of three classes; the *guardians*, composed of gold (embodiment of its *thought*); the *warriors*, of silver (who express its *courage*), and the industrious, of brass[1] (who represent and provide its physical and *sentient good*). Each of these is to be the origin and treasury of an appropriate virtue: the first, of wisdom; the second, of high spirit; the third, of self-restraint and moderation; and to secure the respective production of these, all the threads of causation which draw them forth are to be gathered up into the hand of Law. Hence, the connection between the sexes, the number of births, the distribution of property, the choice of occupation, the daily meal, the course of training and instruction, the control of literature and art, the construction of dwellings, and all the minutest particulars

[1] Rep. 415 A.

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of life and habit, are to be the objects of public care. This however applies especially to the guardians; and in no case beyond the two higher classes; to whom alone, in order to screen them from the seductions of personal interest, the obnoxious prohibitions of property and marriage refer [1]. As they are to be the embodiment of the highest and all-comprehending virtue, their whole training requires the most careful regulation, that no spoiling influence may come near them. It is indispensable at any price to give them true philosophic insight. 'Until in our states either philosophers are kings, or the present nominal kings and princes become genuine and competent philosophers, and political power and philosophy coalesce, and the ordinary natures that seek the one without the other are forced to stand aside, there is no rest from ills for states, or indeed for human kind, and this commonwealth of ours cannot possibly be born and see the light [2].' The philosophic training should begin with the mathematical sciences; to be succeeded, after the thirtieth year, by dialectic discipline; at thirty-five are to commence fifteen years of active service among the military class; and at fifty the proper inauguration is to take place into the ruling order. Exercises in music and gymnastics are to precede and accompany this course of education, and to be shared with the warrior class; the greatest care being taken to exclude all wild Lydian music which excites the passions, and all poetry which, like Homer's and Hesiod's, gives low and unworthy representations of the gods. With a view to a vigorous

[1] The word *φύλακες* is used sometimes of the political governors alone, e. g. 421 B. (where the *ἐπίκουροι* coupled with them are the warriors), 428 D. (where it is admitted that the epithet *τέλειοι* or *ἀληθινοί* should be added to make the limited meaning clear); at other times, of the political and military orders taken together, e. g. 463 C. (where it has the same extent as the compound phrase previously employed, *σωτηράς τε καὶ ἐπικούρους*). This ambiguity makes it sometimes difficult to determine whether the regulations provided for the responsible classes of the state are intended for both sections, or only for the higher

[2] Rep. 473 D.

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physical development, Plato prescribes for women participation in gymnastic exercises and in war. Of the third or industrial class he takes scarcely any notice; they are treated as by nature *subject* to the others as their *rulers:* nor is any higher hope or ambition manifested for them, than that they should be brought to the life of orderly self-restraint and willing co-operation with the public law. In this respect, and in his unhesitating allowance of slavery as the consequence of foreign conquest[1], Plato betrays his personal dislike of the Athenian democracy, and his Hellenic pride towards the barbarian world. Indeed the mind of Plato (unlike that of Aristotle) was throughout intensely Greek; and if in his sense of beauty, his dramatic perception, his dialectic acuteness, his vivid simplicity, his religious depth, he exhibits the genius of his race in the richest blossom, we must deal tenderly with the limitations incident to the same type of race and season of the world. At the same time, the peculiarities of his social doctrine no further belong to his race, than that his race determined his philosophy. The complete merging of the individual in the common life, the suppression of all egoism, which he required, the visible enthroning of the universal good in the institution of a ruling order, all resulted directly from his belief in the ideal essence of the universe, and in the necessity of impregnating with it and regulating by it the material sphere of phenomena and experience. The sharp opposition which he thus brought into the human realm from the cosmic between the divine and the earthly, the universal and the particular, is not unlike the distinction familiar to Christendom between the kingdom of heaven and the domain of secular affairs: and he justifies the philosopher's abstinence from actual political life by the very reasons which have withheld enthusiastic Christians from the exercise of a citizen's duty and the strife of civil contest[2]. States as they are express chiefly the lowest (or epithumetic)

[1] Rep. 469 B—D. Legg. 776 B—778 A.
[2] Theæt. 173 C—176.

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part of human nature, and are the arena on which men under its rule contend for the prizes of wealth and honour: the just and wise will shun a scene through which the higher elements of the soul cannot pass uninjured[1]. An *ideal state* there is, the model of which is stored in heaven; and in that divine polity, if ever it comes down to earth, he will take part[2]. Plato's State indeed presents, amid undeniable contrasts, some curious points of analogy with the hierarchical form of the Christian Church. Both aim at the realisation of a divine idea in human life through the framework of a social organism. Both regard this divine element as having its unity in the corporate society, by affiliation with which each becomes at once its participant and organ. Both agree in treating the personal nature of individuals left to themselves as wild and ruinous, and requiring its subjection, if possible by internal surrender, if not, by external obedience, to the righteousness embodied in the whole. When Plato says that if a multitude cannot be brought to know and serve holiness itself, it is well for them to do it at second hand by obeying holy men[3], we seem to hear the very voice of a mediæval priest. The systems again concur in leaving the desires of the individual most free in the class which is least in esteem; and in demanding the completest self-abnegation where there is the highest trust of dignity and power. Nay, the very sacrifices by which Plato would ward off temptation from his φύλακες are akin to those which Catholicism has enforced upon her priests; viz. the foregoing of domestic life, the relinquishment of private property, and the surrender of all voice in the selection of the personal position. The forcible repression of private claims on behalf of a corporate personality, the allowance of them only in so far as they give individualised expression to the idea of the whole, the creation of distinct classes to be living representatives of the divine type in its several parts and functions, betrays the origin of the Roman

[1] Gorg. 521 D—522 B. Rep. 500, 517 C, D. [2] Rep. 592.
[3] Ib. 590 D, E.

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Catholic Church from the same spiritual Realism which constructed the Republic of Plato: as his commonwealth was the earthly embodiment of a celestial and universal righteousness, so was the Church the visible body of the invisible and heavenly Christ,—at once his witness and his abode: and as in the former case each particular man derived all his worth and significance from his intertexture with the system, apart from which he became detached from the eternal Justice, so in the latter did each one receive his sacred mark through baptismal inauguration, without which he remained an alien from grace; and drew his moral nourishment and life from the Church, which superinduced upon his helpless and lower self a higher spiritual nature. Hegel justly contrasts this relentless subjugation of the individual, into which Plato was in part provoked by the corruption of Greek cities through the wantonness of private passions, with the principle of Christianity which raises every single soul to an infinite importance, and so gives a religious inspiration to the claims of democratic equality[1]. But this principle after all represents only one side of Christianity, though the side most familiar to Protestants; and to complete it we must add the Catholic conception, that the individual soul first finds her divine dignity and receives the seal of consecration, when obediently gathered into the great community which represents the heavenly rule on earth. On *this* side there is no contrast, but the closest analogy, between the Platonic and the Christian notion; and it is by embodying this feeling that Roman Catholicism so curiously forms the middle term between the ancient and the modern systems of society and polity,—the one dealing with individuals as organs and media of a common life entitled to priority,—the other constituting a state by the aggregation of individuals, who bring to it their antecedent ends and constrain it to work them out. Nor would either Plato or the hierarchy allow that the restraints they put on separate self-will at all

[1] Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie, II. 260.

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contradict the principle of the divine worth of the individual soul. On the contrary, it was precisely on the souls they loved and honoured most that they laid the heaviest burden of restraint; they reversed the rule of worldly scorn and tyranny, which strip the many of liberty and goods to enrich and indulge the few; and conceding to the multitude freedom of employment, with the rights of family and of property, reserved the severities of self-denial to strew with thorns the path of power, and deter the selfish and unworthy from approach[1]. The real failure both of the Platonic State and of the Catholic Church was this; that, though they acknowledged each person to constitute an end in himself as well as to be the member of a whole, they fulfilled this end for him by social institutions, instead of making it contingent on a subjective condition limited to his own consciousness; and it was not till the Reformation proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith, that Christianity vindicated to itself an element to which no parallel can be found in the Greek or the mediæval conception.

§ 6. *Summary of Characteristics.*

We have now examined in its leading features the whole fabric of the Platonic system; and have shown how curiously its ethics depend upon its physics, and its physics upon its dialectic. Before we leave it, we may gather up the threads which determine its moral pattern, and discriminate it from other doctrines with which it may be compared.

(1) The proper aim of man is not pleasure or the contentment of the sensitive nature, but a good which may run counter to this, and the chief elements of which are truth, beauty, right. These are to be sought, not for the sake of anything ulterior, but on their own account, as having intrinsic and ultimate worth, and entitled to legitimate the

[1] See Ferd. Chr. Baur's 'Das Christliche des Platonismus,' p. 28 seqq.

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pursuits which lead to them. Plato thus denies the postulate of the hedonist morality.

(2) This *good*, though including the just regulation of the active principles of conduct, does not terminate here, but takes in also the right direction of the rational powers; nay, is so far intellectual in its last essence that it is properly called insight or wisdom,—a comprehensive term which carries within it every form of excellence, be it of intelligence or character. Plato thus sides with those who seek for moral ideas in the rational faculty.

(3) The good which supplies the proper human aim, is not merely subjective and dependent on the constitution of the human faculties. It has an objective reality, which would remain though we were not: nor in any possible universe could the evil and the good change predicates. Moreover, it is as little relative to the phenomena of created things as to the temper of our minds; for it was present and was good before all phenomena, and was at once the sphere and operating cause from which they sprang. Ere yet any perishable thing arose, it was ready as a universe of organising thought, able to persuade negation to assume a form. Thus the end to which human life directs itself is declared to be superhuman, eternal, absolute, divine. Its separate existence prior to all phenomena constitutes its *transcendency;* and this, together with its predicate of *Intellect*, justifies its assumption of the name *God*.

(4) This highest good then has its seat both at home and abroad,—in us and out of us. How does it pass from the one to the other? We are not mere recipients of it from a foreign source; it does not come to us for the first time from the external scene; but in apprehending it we give as much as we take. Its various types, embodied in the visible universe, are also indigenous treasures of the human mind, which has pre-existed as well as they, and been familiar with them in an earlier state; and when now they present themselves before our conscious thought, it is that

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we recover them by remembrance, and recognise the ancient face of truth and reality under its phenomenal disguise. Whatever is good is evolved from us by appeal to memory; virtue is learnt; and learning is remembrance[1].

(5) It follows from this that our relation to God as the divine ground and source of the universe is a relation of *likeness*, arising from identity of essence,—of the little to the great, the mixed and disguised to the pure and clear, the partial copy to the perfect original, within the compass of the same *kind* of being. All that is highest in the souls of men,—the true, the beautiful, the good,—is not so much a possession gained by faithfulness of will, as the unspoiled residue of an uncreated nature and a diviner life[2]. It is the emergence and self-assertion, from beneath the overwhelming floods of transient phenomena, of a godlike and eternal element which may be latent but not lost. In this conception, virtue is divested altogether of the character of *Law;* the aim at it is in no sense an *obedience;* its realisation establishes us in *communion with God*, but can hardly be said to win His *approbation.* Instead of the force of moral legislation and authoritative distinction of right and wrong, we are referred to the inherent attraction of kindred being, thought for thought, and harmony for harmony. In trusting itself to this principle of love and homeward aspiration, Plato's moral persuasion comes into comparison with those forms of Christianity which insist upon the Gospel to the exclusion of Law, and rely, for the sanctification of the human mind, on the kindred established with the heavenly Christ, and the assimilating affection directed upon His holy nature. There is, however, this great difference: that while those Christians regard such love and tendency towards an infinite perfection as præternaturally superinduced on a reluctant nature, Plato treats it as the very ground and essence of the soul,—the sigh of the exile for her native air.

(6) Whether this *communion* of the human with the divine,

[1] Phædo, 72–77. [2] Tim. 90 A, B.

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as of like with like, amounts in Plato's doctrine to *conscious sympathy* or intercourse, as between mind and mind, is a difficult question, depending on our solution of a more comprehensive one, viz. whether he teaches the *personality of God*. It is only between *persons* that sympathy and intercourse can take place; and if there should be reason to believe that in the dialogues of Plato personal predicates are only mythically attributed to God, and that he really never passed beyond the conception of some essence of Thought without a Thinker, of spontaneous Power without Will, of plastic Art without an Artist, we must deny to his sense of relationship between the human and the universal Mind any higher character than attaches to the yearning of instinct, as contrasted with the mutual interchange and intelligent interpretation of living looks. It may seem at first sight absurd to raise such a question; for are not all the terms by which Plato designates the first principle and ground of things terms denoting *rational being?* Does he not call God *Intellect*, and ascribe to Him *knowledge*, *justice*, *ungrudgingness?* and how but in a person can these mental attributes be conceived? It is, however, certain that in the ancient philosophy such a rule as this would frequently mislead us; words expressive of mental life and action were employed where no proper idea of personality was present, merely to describe a dynamical evolution by steps accordant with the movement of intelligence in us. Diogenes of Apollonia taught the origin of all things from an *intelligent atmosphere;* and Anaxagoras referred the system of nature to a *formative* νοῦς; neither of which can be supposed by anyone to amount to a doctrine of proper Theism. The same remark applies to Aristotle's definition of God, as '*thought of thought*[1];' and Plato himself, not in his myths, but in the course of strict philosophic exposition, speaks of the cosmos, or created God, as an object of prayer; e.g. Timæus at the commencement of the Crito implores this being to confirm him in whatever may be right and true,

[1] καὶ ἔστιν ἡ νόησις, νοήσεως νόησις, Met. XII. 9.

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and administer suitable correction for whatever may be wrong in what he has advanced[1]. The notion of personality indeed was held very indistinctly and with great fluctuation by the Greek philosophers,—not less so in relation to the human than in regard to the divine; and if we carry the modern idea of its more determinate form back into the ancient systems, we shall search in vain for any positive answer to the questions which it starts all round. Were we to push the enquiry, what Plato taught about the personality of *man*, his anthropology might be shown to have the same difficulties as his theology; the boundary between one's self and nature, between subject and object, is not at all clearer within the human circle, than in the great whole is the separation between God and the universe. I cannot resist the conviction that, in whatever sense Plato conceived man to be a person, in the same sense he supposed God to be a person: nor can we go far wrong in saying, that (like the modern German schools) he placed the essence of personality in *reflective self-consciousness*. To awaken this and evolve its treasures of truth and revelations of reality was the great end of his dialectic, which was but the philosophic path of the Socratic self-knowledge; and since, just in proportion as it neared its final goal, our ideas became at once distinctly aware of themselves and akin to His, the perfecting of the personal attribute brought us into the likeness as well as the friendship of God. This strict correspondence between the human thought and the divine leaves it but little doubtful that the self-consciousness which was the consummation of the one could not be denied to the other. Moreover the transcendent existence attributed to God (or the idea of the good), prior to any creative efficiency, points in the same direction; for though we may perhaps, by a questionable strain of abstracting power, *infuse* Thought into actual nature as its inner principle of development without any idea of personality, we can hardly assign to it a *pre-existence* or an *existence beyond*, without the

[1] Crito, 106 A, B.

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recognition of its self-consciousness; a *Natura naturans* is tied down by indissoluble relation to a *Natura naturata;* and if not yet busied with this, if flung back into an anterior loneliness, cannot remain idle there, but must turn in upon itself and be self-conscious. The divine life was regarded as a descent into the creation of phenomena by the same steps,—the series of εἴδη,—which our reason ascends in the opposite direction on its way to its proper goal; and if studious regress suffices to invest the traversing thought with personality, the creative progress cannot certainly do less. Again, if we turn to the Platonic triads and remember that, as the human being contains the three descending constituents of reason, soul, and body, so the entire system of things includes the divine reason, the soul of the universe, and matter; and if we ask ourselves in which of the three human elements Plato would find the seat of self-consciousness, we cannot hesitate to reply,—in the *reason;* not certainly in the body, whose special disgrace is its resistance to this endowment; nor in the ψυχή, which is distinctly the animal principle with its group of mere instincts and impulses; but in the reason, which is above them both and anterior to both. Residing thus in the primæval and eternal part of us, self-consciousness is not a thing that has first come upon the stage in the process of genesis; it is not incident to the transition from real to phenomenal being; but, inherent in the former, is brought down thence into the latter. Finding it then in ourselves before we were differenced from God, we should violate consistency were we not to attribute it to Him. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that Plato certainly assigns no personal self-consciousness to the *soul of the universe,* whose formation is perfectly analogous to that of ours; yet this he must have done, had he regarded this endowment as due to the evolution and not to the primal data of existence. His philosophy therefore either provides no account at all of the faculty which is its constant pride and glory, or fixes it in that eternal reason

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which is the common ground of divine and human perfectness.

Against these considerations, however, the principle of Plato's own dialectic is turned. It is urged that his graduated world of *ideas* ascends by steps from the less to the more general, ever more and more widely denotative, less and less fully connotative; so that, as we rise, all composition and number disappear, and at the summit we reach absolute unity, excluding plurality. That summit is the idea of the good, i.e. God. If He therefore, regarded as thought or essence, is absolutely simple, He can have no predicates; for to predicate anything of Him is to attribute *characteristics* to Him,—to say that He partakes of some other εἶδος. To speak of '*personal Godhead*' refers us either to personality that partakes of the idea of Godhead; or to Godhead that partakes of the idea of personality; either of which gives us not the culminating Unit, but a lower plurality. This objection is undeniably conceived in the genuine spirit of the doctrine of εἴδη; the rigorous consequences of which, as of every attempt at unitary deduction of a universe by predicamental logic, carry us upward to an impersonal First Cause, and downward to an unmoral world. But the instances are so numerous in which Plato has committed the inconsequence, that the argument from it has no weight. He has everywhere left the upper strata of his Ideal doctrine in great obscurity; its summit is lost in cloud; and though, as far as we can trace it, it slopes up as if it would lead to a single pinnacle bathed in eternal light, yet wherever a breath of poetry and love sweeps the veil partially away, there is a glimpse disclosed of the two-peaked Parnassus of a majestic Dualism. We may the less scruple to admit in Plato a religious theory inconsistent with his ideal doctrine, because he has himself virtually allowed it. Having laid it down that the εἴδη are in themselves motionless entities, which, if active, are so by partaking of the further εἶδος of activity; and having also described the idea of the good as one of them, though the highest; he could not overlook the

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fact, that he was thus destitute of any principle of motion, unless he violated, on behalf of this supreme term, the rule of inaction which he held for all the others. This, accordingly, he openly does, and (as we have seen) expressly fixes the seat of causality in *reason and wisdom*, to which, he says, Zeus himself (i.e. the cosmic organism) owes his kingly intellect and soul[1]. What is here denoted by the terms reason and wisdom and made the causal fountain of all is the same that elsewhere is intended by the *idea of the good:* to this therefore he undeniably ascribes an exceptional self-activity, which, in mind that is prior to all and destitute of external relations, involves self-consciousness. On these grounds I think that we must go a little further than Zeller, who decides that Plato usually conceived of God as if personal, yet was restrained by a doctrine inconsistent with such conception from approaching it closely or setting it deliberately on any scientific ground; and that we may regard him as fully aware of the conditions of the problem, and, though unable to solve it without lesion of his dialectic, yet deliberately pronouncing judgment on the side of his religious feeling.

In these remarks, however, I have spoken as if the *personality* of a being were properly determined by the test of his *self-consciousness*. Were we to adopt a more exact criterion, and enquire for his *Will*, we should not be able to vindicate so confidently Plato's faith in a *personal God*. No distinction is at all clearly marked, in either his anthropology or his theology, between the two types of mental activity, the voluntary and the involuntary; both are fused together into the common conception of the *spontaneous* or self-moving. That which is the *beginning of motion*, which has its initiatory activity *within it*, is mind, according to this philosopher; nothing more is necessary in order to bring a being under this category than to shut off all foreign impulse and find that still it is not reduced to rest. The spontaneity may work itself out by laws not less determinate than those

[1] Phil. 30 C.

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of the material world, only in the form of evolution from within instead of pressure or impulse from without; it may be the simple outcome of the necessity of the being's nature; it fulfils none the less the conditions of personality. Accordingly, the divine action in constituting the frame of things is described as an intellectual process, rather than an exercise of choice; he rather *thinks out* the universe into realisation than *wills* it; and though he is said to create *the best*, to produce, *as near as may be*, an approximation to himself, and a faint background of inferior things rejected is thus retained, yet the notion of *volition*, entering the field of contingency, and from indeterminate possibilities determining one actuality, never comes clearly forward. If therefore we were to place the essence of personality in the *preferential* power of the mind,—were to make a being's *self* consist in the individuality of this nucleus, and to regard the streams of involuntary thought as the outlying conditions of its exercise, we might be obliged to confess that the God of Plato was *impersonal*. But it must still be remembered that his picture of human nature is, with some qualifications, open to the same remark. And this concurrence of theory respecting the mind of God and that of man is enough to assure us that the communion between the two attained by the wise and good was not regarded as a mere unconscious partnership in the same possession, but as a living amity of kindred beings.

(7) How far Plato's ethics recognised the doctrine of *human responsibility* is a question of some difficulty; but the answer is partly contained in the foregoing remarks. We must first observe that, in his view, all that is excellent and noble and wise belongs to the uncreated element of our nature, and inheres in us as pre-existent and eternal beings; it is the very ground and essence of the mind, which may be covered over by rank and deforming growths, but cannot be brought to more than its original purity. In what sense then can this eternal deposit constitute a *trust*? In this alone; it is ours to *keep*, but not to *win;* however we may

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spoil it, we cannot improve it; it cannot afford a ground of *merit*, though by abuse it may turn to our *disgrace;* when disengaged into clearest view, it is like the divine perfection, which has not been *gained*, but always *was*. Thus the Platonic responsibility in any case limits itself to *conservation* of the given. Next, we must admit that this task is sometimes described as so encumbered with difficulties as to discourage the belief of its possibility at all. Plato insists so much on the effect upon the soul of an unhappy bodily constitution and depraving influences in early life,—he so distinctly shifts the blame of evil-doing from the shoulders of the offender to the society that trains him ill,—he seems to hope so much from the disciplinary arrangements of his State, that a superficial reader might imagine him to be a thoroughgoing advocate of the doctrine of circumstances[1]. And on the same side might be urged the celebrated maxim, already explained, that 'no one is voluntarily bad.' But all this amounts in fact to no more than the admission, readily made by the most strenuous defender of free will, that the surrounding conditions on which the mind's elective power is exercised may become more and more oppressive, restricting the mental view and narrowing the range of choice and palliating the false moral step. That every moral problem was still a case of *preference* for which the agent might justly be called to account, is never questioned; that the entanglement of unfavourable conditions, and even the depraved bodily conditions, are usually to some extent *self-incurred*, is manifestly implied: and even where the whole environment of this life seems unfavourable, Plato provides an escape for the law of responsibility; for in the pre-existent state, when the soul was called upon to select a life, she was free to choose among various lots, and warned that the decision was momentous: *there*, at the fountain head, was no constraint or necessity; the responsibility was with the chooser, and no charge could lie against God. Even the least advantageous of the lives presented

[1] Rep. 415, 416, 459. Tim. 86 B. seqq. Legg. 903 D.

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then afforded scope enough for wisdom and goodness, and compelled no sin: virtue indeed is placed under no Lord, and he who falls into any moral slavery is self-enthralled. This idea recurs in the Timæus, with obvious reference back to the Republic: the Creator is said to have explained to the human souls, when launched into temporal existence, the decrees appointed for them, assuring them that 'their first birth would be the same for all, and that no one should suffer at his hands.' Indeed, in the myth which closes the Republic, the relation between the *freedom* and the *necessity* which meet in human nature is defined with purposed exactitude. There is *one thing*, it is there said, which it is *not open* to the spirits to choose, when they elect their next existence, viz. the *rank* of the soul[1]; and for this reason; that its rank is affected by the conditions of its outward lot, according as they are more or less favourable to the evolution of its worth; and were a choice allowed both of its inherent rank and also of its external life, combinations of incompatible conditions would arise; the very probation of the soul would be lost, which consists in rightly determining the kind of lot most fitted to raise the soul to the highest excellence. Nor in this remark has Plato regard merely to the life on which the soul is *about to enter*, but not less to that from which it has already come. The lots offered to the soul are flung out of the lap of *Lachesis*, the Fate of the *Past;* a mythical incident denoting that our range of choice for the future is limited by the history and habits of time already gone; that the heretofore is the seed-vessel of possibility for the hereafter; so that the soul, however intrinsically free to choose, has her data in part prescribed and restricted by the whole term of existence she has left behind. This is one of the conditions imposed beforehand upon human liberty; and another follows as the posthumous effect of its exercise; for, no sooner have the souls selected their several lots than their filaments are made fast to the spindle of Necessity and twined unchangeably into the

[1] Rep. 618 B.

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thread of the Future. In other words, there can be no exercise of our freedom which does not create a new necessity, and make irrevocably determinate what was indeterminate before; and we live between a Past which brings limits on our choice, and a Future whose open questions we are ever closing by our will. Still, there remains a Present with ample space for preference not thus hemmed in; and Plato urges these restrictions only to make more solemn the responsibility of choice. Observe too the order of sequence and derivation in which he exhibits the two opposite factors of our existence. Does he represent the soul's freedom as a semblance,—a delusive phenomenon, turned up by the play of composite necessities, the disguise under which confluent physical laws meet in our consciousness? On the contrary, he admits no necessity but as the consequence or after-stage of freedom, and puts the *Will* before the *Must*, fetching the determinate out of the indeterminate as its *prior*. It is not till the soul has selected her life by unconstrained vote, that she finds it made fast to the spindle of Necessity; and if she complains that only her outer lot and not her spiritual rank is given her to choose, this is because she has already, in the freedom of an earlier being, done much to determine this, and made some things impossible that were possible before. It is the function of the Fates to wait upon the decisions of free souls, to take only the threads which volition offers, and lending them the machinery of the universe, to weave from them the tissue of the irrevocable. I acknowledge the difficulty of making safe deductions from the mythical passages of Plato's writings. But they often express the doctrines most sacred to his faith, though least effectually grounded in his philosophy; and the careful construction of the last pages of the Republic, the precision of the parts and the balance of the whole, forbid us to set down to the score of mere embellishment any marked feature of the picture, and justify the conclusion that he attributed to the soul a free will which rendered impossible her escape from responsibility.

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(8) At the same time, this doctrine occupies, it must be confessed, an uneasy and unadjusted seat in his philosophy, and has little effect on his applied ethics. How much the soul's freedom is expended at the juncture between her successive lives, and how little may remain to her when once she has made her irrevocable choice of a new lot, is evident from this: that the choice determines not only her particular place and function in the sphere of human affairs, not only her re-appearance as man or woman, but even whether her existence shall be that of mankind at all, and not rather that of the birds or brutes. The very same kind of souls, those that have already played their conspicuous part in history, are represented as some of them returning into the old field, and others retiring into the lower regions of natural history and figuring as swans and apes. As it is impossible to apply to such creatures the notion of moral responsibility, Plato must have conceived of the soul as exhausting its freedom in the one act of fatal choice, and thenceforward passing into the captivity of an animal existence; and though no human life could involve, in his judgment, a thraldrom so complete, yet the very mixture of the cases together under the same head, shows that, even here, an approximate loss of freedom might be incurred in almost every degree. A primitive and ideal liberty common to the souls of brutes and men could be of little avail for the moral theory of human life; and though attesting Plato's faith in eternal rectitude as the ground of the universe and the key to its dispositions, proves at the same time that, to find the just law and the moral freedom which his feeling demanded, he was obliged to look beyond the present scene of things; and that, when dealing with its interior, he had to acquiesce in a pressure of necessitating conditions analogous to the organic laws which fence off the species and regulate the life of brutes. Thus there was nothing in his doctrine of free will to prevent his proposing to deal with human persons as he would with dogs and horses: to pay attention to the breed, to study the breaking-in, to allot the proper work and

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discipline, and in all respects subordinate the individual to the improvement of the race. It is necessarily a two-faced philosophy which fits up all animated nature from the same stock of souls, which recognises old Ajax in a lion, and suspects its bosom friend to be no other than Argos, Ulysses' dog: whether the doctrine tends more to humanise our treatment of the brutes, or to degrade our sentiments towards men, is a problem which the differing tempers of believers will oppositely solve. For the soul in its own essence, and for great and good souls among mankind, Plato certainly had the deepest reverence; but he had no share in the religious sentiment of democracy which dignifies man *as man*, and regards with indifference the highest personal qualities in comparison with the essential attributes of common humanity. He did not attain to the Christian feeling, that the capacity for duty ennobles and sanctifies the life and mind of smallest scale; on the contrary, his intentness on a supreme and ideal good made him look down on what was far below, and gave to his aspiration, so sublime on its upward face, an expression, on the obverse side, of indifference or contempt. It has been said that his whole spirit, as well as the institution of his ideal state, was intensely aristocratic. In one sense, the statement is undoubtedly true. He rated so high the difficulty of attaining genuine insight and goodness, that he thought it much if they could be realised even in a few; and had no hope that the mass of men, overborne by the pressure of material necessity and unchastened desires, could be brought, under the actual conditions of this world, to more than the mere beginnings of wisdom. To neutralise the evil in them, and dispose them to recognise and obey the goodness of disinterested men higher than themselves, was the utmost that Plato expected from them. He did not even suppose that, left to themselves, they would be likely to make choice of the persons best fitted to govern them; he held that to discover insight in another requires it in one's self; and to let loose upon the multitude a free competition between the mild persuasion of

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the wise and the demagogue's appeal to blind and passionate desires, was to give the good no chance. In the ballot-box of ignorance and prejudice and self-will, there would ever be a black ball against the noblest names. So far, Plato was at one with the opponents of democracy. But his resistance proceeded rather from a *theocratic* than an *aristocratic* principle; and brings him into analogy much more with the position of the Roman Catholic hierarchy than with that of the feudal nobility. The feeling with which he looked on the mass of mankind was not the scorn of a Coriolanus, but the compassion of a Gregory; and if on the one hand he denied the virtues of mere aggregated littleness and mediocrity, he no less denounced on the other the pretensions of selfish oligarchy and usurpation, and invariably reckoned the tyrant (the man who seizes a power to which he has no right, and uses it for his own ends) as the meanest and basest object in the universe,—the one offender for whom divine retribution never relents. His judgment indeed of rulers is much severer than of the ruled; and his exclusiveness consists only in this; that he acknowledges no title or capacity for governing, except wisdom and nobleness of character, tested and confirmed by self-denial and laborious discipline; and that for the multitude of men, who occupy a lower stage of character, there is nothing so good as to be under the guidance of this higher sway. The idea of submitting divine questions to their suffrage he would have repudiated as decidedly as the Curia at Rome: but those with whom the determination rested were bound to regard themselves as organs of a higher spirit, and to make that spirit felt through the body politic by letting it penetrate themselves, and making the very exercise of rule a supreme act and expression of obedience.

§ 7. *Myth of Er, the Armenian.*

I have so often had occasion, in the foregoing summary, to refer to the myth at the end of the Republic, that it may

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perhaps interest the English reader to see the whole of it. If it is not exact philosophy, neither is it empty fiction; but presents views of life and the universe with which Plato certainly intended his philosophy to be compatible. It runs thus:

'Such, said I, are the prizes, rewards, and gifts which, in addition to the good things provided by Justice herself, accrue to the upright man during life from the hands of gods and men.

'And right noble and solid they are, he said.

'Yet these are nothing either in number or magnitude compared with the awards which await each of the two opposite characters after death; and these must be told, in order that each of the two may get to hear what our subject yet owes him.

'Speak on, he said, and believe that you have a hearer to whom few things could be more acceptable.

'I shall not, however, said I, tell you an Alcinous (Ἀλκίνου) story, but that of a certain brave (ἀλκίμου) Armenian, Er, of the family of Pamphylus. He was once killed in war; and when after ten days the bodies of the slain were taken up already in a state of decay, his was found in perfect preservation, and was carried home for the funeral. And on the twelfth day, as it lay on the pile, he came to life again, and on re-entering life related what he had seen in the other world. He said, that on its exit his soul, proceeding in company with many others, arrived with them at a certain wonderful place, where were two clefts in the earth adjacent to one another, and opposite to these two corresponding ones in the heaven above. Between these were seated judges, who, when the verdict was passed, ordered the departure of the just, with certificates of their sentences suspended in front, by the right-hand cleft upwards through the heaven; and that of the unjust, only with the certificates of all that they had done hung behind, by the left-hand downward cleft. On his arrival, he was told that he was to act as reporter to mankind of what happened there, and

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instructed to observe by eye and ear everything in the place. So there he saw the souls after judgment go off by each of these two clefts of the heaven and the earth; and by the other two were souls arriving; from that in the earth, ascending covered with dust and dirt, from the remaining one descending pure from heaven. The souls, as they arrived, seemed to come as from a vast journey, and went with joy into the meadow to encamp, as in a great gathering of kindred tribes; and greetings were exchanged by all that knew one another; and those who had arrived from the earth asked about the things above, and the new comers from heaven about the things below. And in this exchange of tidings, the terrestrial souls wept and lamented, on recalling all that they had suffered and seen on their subterranean way,—it was a journey of a thousand years,—while the celestial souls told of a happy experience, and sights of unimaginable beauty. The greater part of the recital, Glaucon, it would take (he said) too long to tell; but these he declared to be the chief points. For all his acts of wrong and all the persons he had wronged, every one suffered retribution in detail, ten times for each,—renewed, that is, century by century, that being the estimated length of a human life; that they might pay tenfold the penalty for injustice. If there were some, for instance, who had been the cause of many deaths, by betraying a city or a camp into slavery, or had been accomplices in any other misdeed, for every one of all these things they were to receive a tenfold anguish; and if, on the other hand, there were some who had shown themselves men of beneficence and uprightness and sanctity, they were to receive their desert by the same rule. Of those who are just born and live but a short time he said something of a different kind, which I need not now repeat. But he declared that in regard to reverence or irreverence towards the gods and towards parents, and in regard to murder, retribution was awarded on a still higher scale. For he was present, he said, when one of the souls asked another where Ardiæus the Great was. Now this

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Ardiæus had made himself tyrant in a Pamphylian city a thousand years before that time, having put to death his old father and his elder brother, and (tradition said) committed many other impious deeds. To this question the soul, he said, replied, "He has not come hither, nor will he come; for among the dreadful sights we saw was this: when we were near the mouth of the cleft, and having gone through everything were on the point of emerging, suddenly we beheld him with others, chiefly tyrants, though not without some who in private stations had perpetrated great crimes; and just as they were expecting to emerge, the cleft refused them passage through its mouth, and uttered a roar, when any soul thus incorrigibly wicked or as yet inadequately punished attempted to come out. On this appeared instantly at hand, knowing what this sound meant, certain wild beings of human aspect and fiery to behold, who clasped some of them and carried them away; but bound Ardiæus and others hand and foot and head, and hurled them down and flayed them, by dragging them against thorns along the side-wall of the passage; explaining at the same time to the passing souls as they went by, for what guilt this torture was inflicted, and how they were on their way to be thrown into Tartarus: whereupon, greater than all the various fears experienced in their journey, the terror seized each spirit there, lest that roar should meet him when he reached the top; while, if all kept still, he came up with joy." Such was the nature of the punishments and retribution there; while the blessings awarded were just the counterpart of these.

'Now when they had spent each seven days in that meadow, on the eighth they had to break up and move on; and after four days more they reached a spot whence they saw a columnar line of light stretching from above right across the whole heaven and earth, like a rainbow, only brighter and purer. This itself they reached after another day's journey; and there, in the middle of the light, they saw extending out of heaven the ends of its fastenings;

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for this light is the band of heaven, holding together the whole circumference, like the undergirth of ships; and out of these ends proceeds the spindle of Necessity, by means of which all the revolving bodies perform their circuits; the shaft and winch being of adamant, but the spool a compound of this and other materials. Now the nature of the spool is as follows: in shape it is like what we employ; but, according to his account, we must think of it as if within the hollow of one large spool scooped out all through in the interior, were adjusted another smaller one of the same kind, like barrels that fit one within another; and then, further within, a third and a fourth, with afterwards four more: for there are eight spools in all, lying one within another, presenting circular *edges* as seen from above, together making up an apparent continuous surface as of a single spool around the spindle, which is driven in the centre right through the eighth. The first and outermost spool has its circular edge the *broadest;* after that, the sixth; next, the fourth; then, the eighth; followed in order by the seventh, the fifth, the third; and, last of all, the second. And again, the edge of the largest is variegated; that of the seventh the most brilliant, while that of the eighth has its colour from the light of the seventh: those of the second and fifth are very like each other, and yellower than the rest; that of the third has the whitest colour, of the fourth a reddish, of the sixth the whitest but one. In the turning of the spindle the same revolving motion is given to the whole: but while the whole is carried round, the seven interior circles glide with slow rotation in the opposite direction; and of these the quickest in its motion is the eighth: next come, all with the same velocity, the seventh, sixth, and fifth: after that, as it seemed to them, was the cycle of the fourth; then the third; and, last of all, the second[1]. The spindle turns in the lap of Necessity;

[1] The several arrangements into which Plato here throws these bodies, in respect of concentricity, breadth of edge, velocity of revolution, and colour, may be exhibited in one view:

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and, carried round with the circles, one resting on the upper surface of each, and uttering one single note, were Sirens; whose eight voices together composed a harmony. More-

	1 *Concentric Order.*	2 *Breadth of Edge.*	3 *Velocity of Revolution.*	4 *Colour and Brightness.*
1	Fixed Stars, or Zodiacal Band	1		ποικίλον.
2	Saturn	8	5	like the 5th, ξανθότερα than the rest.
3	Jupiter	7	4	λευκότατον.
4	Mars	3	3	ὑπέρυθρον.
5	Mercury	6	2	like the 2nd, ξανθότερα than the rest.
6	Venus	2		δεύτερον λευκότητι.
7	Sun	5		λαμπρότατον.
8	Moon	4	1	τὸ χρῶμα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑβδόμου προσλάμποντος.

It is impossible to combine all the particulars given in the text into a self-consistent picture of the universe, conceived as disposed around the earth as a centre. The statements tabulated in the first, third, and fourth columns correctly describe the apparent facts, except that the places of Mercury and Venus in the concentric order are inverted, as they are also in the Timæus, 38 D. But it is impossible to reconcile the figures in the second column with any interpretation of the spools and their breadth of edge. The object or system contemplated by the observer is undoubtedly the Zodiacal belt of the heavens, which, if cut out from the total sphere by disregarding the rest, would answer to the description of a barrel, containing, one within another, the circles or rims of the planets, sun, and moon. If the spectator looks at this from the line of the polar axis, indefinitely produced, he will see orbit within orbit lying, like circles on a slate, sufficiently near to occupy in his thought the same plane; and the interval between each two might be regarded as the *edge* of the outer barrel or spool. In this way the different *breadths* would correspond with the distances of orbit from orbit; but the figures do not range themselves in the order of any intelligible geocentric estimate of these apparent zones. If we remove the spectator to the only other conceivable position, and plant him in the plane of the equator beyond the milky way, he would see each orbit, in virtue of its inclination to that plane, ascending and descending through the Zodiacal belt; and if, from the summit and bottom points reached, planes were run out parallel to his own, the space embraced between them would be a cylinder (or spool) presenting its side or breadth, and not its top, to view. In this way, the several breadths would be measured by the inclinations of the orbits; and neither with these do the assigned figures agree; if they did, they would run thus: 1, 6, 8, 5, 2, 4, 3, 7. Notwithstanding this inexactitude, the reader is probably intended to assign the observer to the polar point of view.

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over, at equal intervals around sat, each upon a throne, in white robes and with chaplets on their heads, Necessity's three daughters, the Fates,—Lachesis and Clotho and Atropos: to the Sirens' harmony they sung, Lachesis, the Past,—Clotho, the Present,—and Atropos, the Future. And Clotho, from time to time, helped with the touch of her right hand to turn the spindle's outermost circle, and Atropos with the left in like manner those within; while Lachesis with either hand touched both in turn. Now the souls had no sooner arrived here, than they had to present themselves at once before Lachesis. First, a prophet disposed them in their order; then, taking out of the lap of Lachesis a number of lots on the one hand and samples of different modes of life on the other, he ascended a lofty bema and said:—"This is the word of the virgin Lachesis, daughter of Necessity: 'Souls of a day! for the mortal race begins another mortal course: no destiny (*δαίμων*) shall cast lots for you, but you shall choose your destiny: let him to whom the first lot falls select a life, by which he will then of necessity abide. But virtue is subject to no lord; and each, as he honours or dishonours it, will have more or less of it; the charge is with the chooser; chargeless is God.'" This said, he threw the lots among them all, and each took up that which fell at his side, except Er himself, who was not allowed. And on taking up his lot, every one discovered what number had fallen to him. Next, he put before them on the ground the samples of lives, in number far exceeding the souls present; and all sorts were there,—lives of all kinds of animals, and human lives of every class. For among them were tyrannies, some permanent, others overthrown in mid career and ending in poverty, exile, and beggary; and lives of men distinguished, some for their

The columnar band of light can hardly be anything else than the milky way, which passes sufficiently near the poles to find its mythical fastening there. And the spindle of Necessity is evidently the polar axis, which, through the hand of Clotho, determines the motion of the cosmic sphere from east to west, while the retrogradation of the planets from west to east is provided for by that of Atropos.

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personal qualities whether of beauty or strength or athletic aptitude, others for their family and the virtues of their ancestry; and of undistinguished men in like variety, and so of women too. The soul's rank, indeed, was not given among the objects of choice, because by electing a different life the soul necessarily becomes different; but all the other elements were presented in various combination with one another,—wealth and poverty, sickness and health, with every intermediate stage. So here it seems, dear Glaucon, lies the whole stake for man; and hence the chief care must be, that each of us, regardless of other attainments, prosecute and master simply this,—to discover, if any attention can do it, *who* is likely to give him capacity and skill, through discrimination of the good from the bad life, to choose always and everywhere the better of the possibilities before him; and by taking into account, in a spirit of careful comparison, what has now been said, and distinguishing its bearing on the virtue of life, to learn under what constitution of soul Beauty (for instance) in union with poverty or wealth conduces to evil or good; and how high or low birth, private or official station, vigour or weakness of body, facility or slowness of mind, and all such conditions as nature and circumstances place around the soul, operate in their several combinations: so as to be able, by computation from all the given elements, and with due regard to the inherent nature of the soul, to discriminate the worse from the better life, meaning by the worse that which will lower the sense of right, by the better that which will exalt it, heedless of everything besides; for this we have seen to be the best principle of choice, whether for life or for its sequel after death. Indeed, in going to the unseen world it is indispensable to have this conviction fixed with adamantine firmness, that there too the soul may be unmoved by riches and such evils, and may not throw itself into tyrannous usurpations and other acts of the same kind, to the creation of manifold and irremediable external ills, yet to its own still greater hurt; but may know how, in

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relation to such things, always to choose the middle life and shun the extremes in either direction, both in this life as far as possible and in all that shall succeed; for so it is that man finds his greatest well-being.

'So our messenger from the unseen world proceeded to relate that the prophet addressed them thus: "Even to him whose turn is last, if he chooses wisely and lives resolutely, there is reserved no bad or ineligible life: let neither the first to choose be careless, nor the last desponding." No sooner had the prophet (said he) finished these words, than the bearer of the first lot went up and chose the greatest tyranny; misguided by folly and greediness, he chose without adequate regard to all the conditions, and failed to notice the destiny involved in his decision,—the devouring of his own children and other ills; but when he contemplated the case at leisure, he struck his head in anguish and bewailed his choice, unheeding of the prophet's warning; for he charged the evil not upon himself, but on fortune and the gods and everything rather than himself. Now he was one of the souls that had come out of heaven; for he had lived through his former life in a well-constituted state; only his hold on virtue was from custom, without philosophy. Indeed one might say, in general, that those who came from heaven were not less often caught than others by such false baits, having had no experience of difficulties: while most of those who came from this world, having both witnessed and felt the struggle with difficulties, did not make their selection on the first impulse. From this cause, together with the cast of the lots, the result to most of the souls was a change from good to evil, or from evil to good. Whereas, according to the messenger's tidings from that world, if a man, on being sent into this life, were to engage himself soundly in the pursuit of wisdom, and his turn for choice had fallen not quite among the last, he might not only be happy here, but make his passage thither from this state and back again, not by the rugged subterranean way, but by a smooth and heavenly. Now as to

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the way in which the souls severally selected their lives, it was a sight, he said, worth seeing,—pitiable and ludicrous and strange; for most were determined in their choice by some experience in their former life. Thus he saw, as he declared, the soul that had once belonged to Orpheus select the life of a swan, through hatred of womankind, occasioned by his death at their hands, and reluctance to be born of a woman. The soul of Thamyros he saw choosing a nightingale's life; a swan on the other hand preferring the change to a human life; and other musical creatures in like manner. The soul that held the twentieth lot chose a lion's life; it was that of Ajax son of Telamon, and it determined against becoming human from recollecting the decision as to the arms. Next came that of Agamemnon; and as he too had been filled by his sufferings with aversion to the human nature, he took instead an eagle's life. The turn of Atalanta's soul came about the middle; and on observing the great honours an athlete might win, she could not resist them, and made choice accordingly. And after her he saw the soul of Epeus son of Panopeus take the character of a female artist; and far on among the last he saw that of the buffoon Thersites putting on the nature of an ape. It so happened that Ulysses' soul had drawn the last chance of all, and advanced to make his choice: remembering his former toils, he now rested from all ambitious cares, and went about for a long time in quest of a private life remote from the turmoil of affairs; with some trouble he found one lying somewhere that had been neglected by all the rest; on seeing which he declared he should have done the same if his turn had been the first, and took it with delight. There were in like manner animals' souls that would take the form of men, and those of one species that would change into another; the unrighteous souls turning into wild beasts, the righteous into tame; nor was there wanting any kind of mixture and exchange. So when all the souls had made their choice, they were brought in the order of

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their lots before Lachesis; who sent with each the genius (δαίμων) he had chosen to be the guardian of his life and the accomplisher of his choice. He led the soul first to Clotho, to have the chosen lot made fast under her hand as she turned the spindle; and having attached it to this, he led the way to Atropos, that her spinning might make the thread of destiny unchangeable. Thence without once turning round he went under the throne of Necessity; and when he had passed through it, and the others had passed too, they all proceeded through parching and dreadful heat to the plain of Lethe,—for it is bare of trees and all that grows upon the earth. Evening having already overtaken them, they encamped by the river Careless (ἀμελης), whose water no vessel can hold. A certain portion of the water all were obliged to drink, but those who were not restrained by reason drank more than the portion; and each, as he drank, forgot everything. When now they had lain down to sleep, at midnight there came thunder and an earthquake; and suddenly, as with the shoot of stars, they were snatched away in every direction up to the birth. The Pamphylian was not allowed to drink of the water; and how and by what course he came back into the body he did not know; but all at once, on looking up in the morning, he found himself already lying on the funeral pile.

'And this relation, Glaucon, has been preserved from perishing, and may be our preservative, if we are attentive to it; and then we shall cross the stream of Lethe well and with immaculate soul. But if my counsel avail, then shall we always, under persuasion that the soul is immortal and equal to the burden of every evil and every good, hold on the upward path, and strive in every way after rectitude with reason, that we may be in friendship with ourselves and with the gods, not only while abiding here, but when as conquerors we go round and gather in the prizes of our victory; and that both now, and on the millennial journey we have described, it may be all well with us[1].'

[1] Rep. X. 614–621 D.

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§ 8. *Ethical Features.*

If from the complex tissue of Plato's thought we try to isolate the ethical elements for separate estimate, we must not hastily assume that they all legitimately belong to his theory of the world, but must carefully consider whether they are to be credited to his system or to his personality. It is one thing to feel the glow of moral enthusiasm in his writings, and quite another to treat it as an emanation from the central principles which control the orbit of his speculation; and it will be found, if I mistake not, that the passages which, by their solemn import, most deeply touch the modern reader, are often those which have the least coherence with the reasoning they affect to illustrate. Had he been able to justify his irresistible convictions of right and wrong by rigorous dialectic, he would not have dispensed with that severer security, and left them to depend on the persuasive charm of his symbolic myths. But there was a limit at which his metaphysics stopped short of the exigencies of his poetic and spiritual nature, and, bringing his counted steps to an end, compelled him to take wing and pass the barrier through the air and in the light of intuitive truth. It has been shown how, in his later period, even his systematic thought brought him to the very verge of a doctrine of Conscience; and few dialogues are without scattered passages evincing his deep sympathy with the primitive moral sentiments and beliefs, untouched as yet by the disenchantments of philosophy. His estimate of human life as a probation, of its sequel as a judicial recompense, and of the whole circulation of the soul as determined by its deserts; his anxiety to fix the responsibility of its lot upon itself, and vindicate the equity of God; his assertion that to do wrong is a far worse evil than to suffer it, and to escape punishment than to endure it, so that the best use you can make of persuasive speech is to bring first yourself

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and next your nearest friend to justice for any offence committed; his indignation at the abuse of power, and especially at the crimes of tyrants in order to grasp and to retain it; are among the many indications of a profound sense of merit and demerit, of justice and injustice in their treatment, of personal righteousness and guilt, consistent only with that free-will which leaves each agent the architect of his own character. These are the pure expressions of Plato's psychological experience.

Are they as true to his philosophy as they are to himself? Surely not. If the mind in me is but the local emergence of the universal Mind, which again is the supreme term of all the εἴδη; if these ideas are the eternal and unchangeable essences of things, affiliated to each other by irreversible interdependence; if their passage from pre-existence to birth is a union of them with material ἀνάγκη; then must the resulting soul be a compound of logical and material Necessity,—the former in its immortal, the latter in its mortal part; and though these two may conflict and contradict each other, the issue must be settled by mere preponderance; they leave no room for an acting personality between, free to elect the better or the worse, and to deserve well or ill accordingly. Hence Plato's ethical appreciations remain without theoretical support; and are apt to lose their purity and nobleness, when they cease to be the expression of individual enthusiasm, and are deduced, by relentless intellectual process, from his assumed principles. His metaphysics, e.g. lead him to group all living and sentient natures together, under the category of *souls;* and consequently to include all other animals as well as man in his scheme of probationary government of the world; so that the same conscious will, without breach of continuity, might conduct the affairs of a hero, a horse, and a wasp. To the true *moral* feeling, based as it is entirely on the distinction between human volition and animal instinct, such a conception can never appear anything but a caricature; a legitimate instrument of satire to humorists

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like Æsop and La Fontaine, but precisely because, in any serious application, it is grotesque and absurd. Equally repugnant to all just valuation of character is Plato's preference of voluntary pravity to involuntary,—a preference openly defended by him against the protest of natural feeling[1]. Whence this paradox? It comes from the supremacy assigned to conscious *Thought*. If this is to have no superior, but to be identified with the absolute 'idea of the good,' it raises every state of feeling which has it above competition with all that have it not; and the intending murderer may look down upon the blundering homicide. Thus to affirm that the worst intention is better than no intention, in other words that you had better be a villain than a fool, might indeed convey a truth under one condition, viz. that the villainy is a passing act, and the folly a permanent incapacity: it would then mean that even crime, as the expression of a nature great and free, is itself a potential goodness; while a blind creature of undiscriminated instincts is *ipso facto* excluded from all candidature of character and is altogether out of the ethical field. No such comparison, however, as that of the responsible nature with the moral idiot is here contemplated: both are supposed to be measurable by the human standard; and the difference is simply the presence or absence, in the same act, of intellectual apprehension of its bearings. So great is the superiority given to this apprehension, that no turpitude can forfeit it, and no innocence replace it. This exaggeration of reflective Reason at the expense of intuitive Right divests the moral law of that intrinsic and unconditional authority which is precisely what it means; and reduces it from a universal light of humanity, flashing through the soul wherever the springs of action meet, to the monopoly of gifted and philosophic minds, which, like the prism, can turn the common beam of day into the spectrum. Nothing can be more equalising than a proper doctrine of *Duty:* nothing less so than an ideal of character

[1] Hipp. Min. 375 D. Rep. 535 E. Conf. 382 A—D.

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approachable only through skill and depth of thought, and reserved therefore for 'the gods' and for the schools.

Ungrounded as a doctrine of Duty, Plato's ethics must be judged as a doctrine of *Virtue*. In this aspect it has many noble features, so long as it works upon its proper field, of the *voluntary* life. Its high demands for the mastery of appetite and passion, its scorn of flattery and pretence, its undazzled estimate of wealth and honours and abhorrence of selfish ambition, its insistency on public fidelity at any cost of private interest, death itself being more welcome to a good citizen than to do and say what is wrong, bespeak a mind possessed by an intense and lofty conception of Righteousness. Had he stopped there, this impression would have remained alone. But it suffers a disappointing qualification, when we find his *virtue* extending its boundary and spreading over the *involuntary* field of life, and denoting the best condition of any quality, whether of natural genius or of personal acquirement; so that intellect also and imagination have their virtues and enter into character, no less than Will, irrespectively of the intentional direction given to them. In other words, the idea of the *Right* is dissolved in that of the *Good*, and indistinguishably mingled with that of the *True* and that of the *Beautiful;* and is held to be realised wherever a gain can be shown on any of these types of 'the Good.' From this equalisation of rational, æsthetic, and ethical judgments it naturally follows that any one of these may supply the place of another; so that, in order to save an advantage of the intellectual or imaginative order, we need not hesitate to let drop a nearly equivalent moral claim. That this cause produces in Plato many a relaxation of the nerve of righteousness cannot be denied. In his impatience of helplessness and deformity, he recommends the exposure and murder of unpromising infants[1]. To preserve the purity and ascendency of the Hellenic race, he would consign to slavery its foreign prisoners of war[2], and even its own hopeless inferiors[3]. In the service of the

[1] Rep. 460 B, C. [2] Rep. 469 B. [3] Polit. 309 A.

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State, breaches of veracity are as freely admitted by him as the administration of medicines on the part of the physician[1]. To the preconceived perfection of the whole social organism everything is to give way,—not the interests only of the individual, but his character; and, to be a patriot, he must consent to become, in his own person, the liar, the assassin, nay, the stock-breeder, of his country. And yet the statesman, from whom these sacrifices are demanded, belongs to the class which alone is to realise and represent the consummate form and entire contents of virtue; while from the others, on which he exercises his arts of government, are expected only the inferior layers of character,—courage and self-restraint. Apart from any inconsistency in its application, this moral stratification of persons carries into Ethics all the mischiefs of the institution of *castes*; paralysing the conscious universality of the Divine law, superciliously dispensing with large portions of it for the mass of men, and so marking them off as a race of stereotyped incapables. This feature, it is true, is softened by the provision, that whenever natures of exceptional promise are born in the industrial order, they shall be adopted and trained among the 'guardians.' But there is no elevation of their class in such removal of them out of it; rather is it bereft of all the richer elements which might give it a progressive impulse, and condemned to perpetual stagnation. The truth which suggested this artificial social structure no doubt is, that your expectations from men are proportioned to their opportunities, and that to whom little is given, of him will little be required. The error is, in treating this variable requirement as a *moral quantity* or constituent element of *character*, instead of mere unmoral material of which the conscience disposes as the instrument of its ends. Of the rich you expect, on behalf of others, larger gifts, but not more generosity, than from the poor; of the full and disciplined mind, more copious diffusion of knowledge than from the uninstructed, but not more willingness to lend

[1] Rep. 389 B, C; 459 C.

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what light there is; just as, with equal dependence on industry of will, you would set a child to weed a flower-bed and a man to plough a field. But the moment you lose sight of this distinction, and fling Right and Intellect and Beauty all into the same crucible, the 'Good' which you turn out from their fusion will be but an alloy; and, however fine the mould into which it is cast, will never have the true ring of righteousness.

But the subordination of the citizen's nature to the needs of the state involved still more fatal sacrifices. From the ideal or '*noetic*' character of Plato's highest good, nothing would seem less possible than that, in his imaginary society, the animal passions should be released from any of the refining and glorifying influences which transform them in the élite of civilised men. To no requirement of his philosophy did he yield himself with more evident zest than to its protest against the theory of the materialists in its assumptions and in its supposed consequences: nor has any Greek interpreter lifted the conception of Eros to an intellectual height more nearly divine than he in the speech of the prophetess Diotima. Yet what his philosophy gained by being anti-materialist, it lost again by being anti-affectional. In the model citizens of his ideal state the propensions which institute the conjugal and parental relations were retained and even provided with their high festivals; but the relations themselves were absolutely expunged: the mother was not the wife; she knew not her own child or his father; nor did they distinguish her among the host of women of the same age. The connections which, above all others in human life, must depend for any blessed fruits upon their permanence, were to be formed and forgotten in an hour; and *this* for the express purpose of preventing those forms of home-love which redeem the soul from vulgar selfishness, and those claims of pressing duty which give sacredness to common work and joy to sacrifice. It is difficult for a modern, with whom the household is the fundamental unit of the commonwealth, to

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conceive a state of society which could provoke a desire in Plato to extinguish the family relations, and encourage a hope of universal devotion by disuse of all private attachments. A country would not be a very promising school of patriotism in which there were no domestic traditions of heroism and faith, no hearth and altar, no parents, sons, and daughters, but only public schools, and club-dinners, and shameless temples of Aphrodite to defend; and to tempt such a conception into existence, society must already, one would think, have become putrescent at the core. And even if the one disinterested enthusiasm, the devotion to the State, were gained, how strangely mutilated is the ideal of personal character in order to secure it! Strike out from the individual soul the power of love, the light of its romance, the fervour of its ambitions, the tenderness of its cares, the vigour of its purity and faithfulness: take from the mother the office of queen of the nursery, and leave her no function but that of child-bearing and wet-nursing to the Republic; and from the father the responsibilities of bread-winner, educator, and king of his own house; and from the child the filial trust and reverence, the fraternal and sisterly heart-affinities which can never be generalised: and the human being is bereft of the most precious springs from which the moral life arises, and can emerge only as a strange medley of the brute, the politician, and the philosopher. A commonwealth of such subjects would hardly, in our estimation, be worth preserving. That Plato thought of it as something divine, with pattern stored in heaven till the earth became worthy to receive it, is directly due to the fundamental principles of his philosophy, that the idea of the absolute Good coincided with the intellectual, which alone was immortal and real; while all that is phenomenal, dependent on the processes of birth, growth, and death, all that belongs to the sphere of genesis and the mortal part of the soul, is at the opposite and meanest extreme of value, and should, as far as possible, be subordinated, if not suppressed, by the wise. Under this latter

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head, it is plain, come all the affections that are incident to the rise of successive generations, and to the differences marking the beginning, middle, and end of human life; and so the domestic institutions and their feelings are flung into the disparaged miscellany of material and emotional things. By this fatal classification, the sweet charities that best wean the heart from self-love are condemned as its allies; and the one social affection on which all demand is concentrated, viz. civic zeal, is cut off from its tributary nourishment, and required to grow and blossom without its roots. The perfection which consists in contemplation of the absolute or the attempt to copy it may be the consummation of Reason, but not of character: the moral will lives and moves among the conditions of the relative; and its whole material is found in those personal affections and alternative motives and transient possibilities, which are intermediate between the blind necessity of instinct and the self-conscious gaze at the eternal Good.

These strictures, I am well aware, are chargeable with a certain inevitable injustice. They are the easy commonplace of a late critical age applied to the genius of an early creative one; and it is not without a sense of inward apology and almost of shame, that for a moment I estimate the most productive of thinkers by a standard to which he is not amenable. To know what he was, and by what quickening elements he enriched the stores and still more the powers of human thought, he must be studied in his place and time, and in his transmitted life in other minds. So it is that we judge of the poets, the historians, the dramatists of lands and centuries remote. But philosophy aspires to rise above the transitory and gain the vision of eternal truth; and it pays the penalty of this proud pretension in being tried by codes and courts for ever new, and having to satisfy the claims of all. Appealing to the absolute, it forbids us to give it only an historical hearing; and we should do it its most aggravating wrong, did we not bring it face to face with the cumulative experience and

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matured insight of the human mind. As we want all the help it can give to our own problems, we must transpose it into the conditions and relations of the present; nor is there any better way, than by such successive comparisons, of realising its own end and saving what is imperishable in it.

In this process it is but too possible, in spite of scrupulous care, to commit involuntary wrong. Between the abstract conceptions of widely separated periods and races there is no accurate correspondence; and the dialectic of philosophic intercourse across the chasm is apt to become faint and confused; and whenever this happens, the perplexed inquirer vainly wishes for some clearing change of phrase, and laments that the voices of the past are silent, and that their words lie there without their wings. I have honestly tried to say what Plato means; but it may well be, that if he were back among his interpreters, he would flutter us all with reproaches for our stupidity; not, however, without kindly allowance for the difficulties of our task; for, notwithstanding his great literary power, no one was more aware of the imperfection of written language as the instrument of the higher thought, or more clearly foresaw the certainty of misconstruction. 'Writing,' he says, 'has this terrible disadvantage, which puts it on the same footing with painting. The artist's productions stand before you, as if they were alive: but if you ask them anything, they keep a solemn silence. Just so with written discourse. You would fancy it full of the thoughts it speaks: but if you ask it something that you want to know about what is said, it looks at you always with the same one sign. And, once committed to writing, discourse is tossed about everywhere indiscriminately among those who understand and those to whom it is nought; and cannot select fit audience from the unfit. And when maltreated and unjustly abused, it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to help or defend itself[1].'

[1] Phædr. 275 D, E.

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BRANCH II.

IMMANENTAL.

Of the unpsychological series of ethical doctrines which offer themselves to our notice I have selected Plato's for our first examination, and have sketched its outlines in the foregoing chapter. It was chosen as the most well-marked and eminent example of strictly *Metaphysical* systems; of systems, that is, which assume as the proper objects of intellect a certain store of real, eternal existences, the abiding ground of whatever is transient and only crosses the stage. And among these systems it occupies the place at which it was desirable that our survey should begin; for it is the most distinguished of *Transcendental* schemes; schemes, that is, which assign to the eternal principle of things a range beyond the sphere of all extant phenomena, so as not to be all expended within their limits of time, space, and quality, but to exceed their measure every way. Plato's first εἶδος,—his supreme type of the good,—his God,—we found to be not only *through* all, but *before* all, *beyond* all, *above* all the manifested expressions of himself. The effect of this mode of thought upon the configuration of Ethical theory and feeling has been traced.

We have not, however, done with the metaphysical sources of moral theory. There remains the *Immanental* scheme; which, while recognising, like the other, both ὄντα and γιγνόμενα, allows no overpassing realm to the former, but makes them simply coextensive; equating in all the modes of quantity, and distinguishing only by qualitative predicates

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Nature and God, the ground or meaning of the universe, and its facts. The forms are very various in which this co-presence, through just the same field, of the fixed Divine element and the transient and perishable appearance, has been maintained; and somewhere between Aristotle and Hegel we must choose a representative who will bring out into strongest relief the characteristics of the theory, and especially its bearings upon the Moral sentiments.

Who then shall guide us through the mysteries of the Immanental Metaphysics? Who is fittest to stand up and contradict the Transcendental doctrine of Plato, and correct its overbalance into religion? Were we engaged upon a mere *History of Philosophy*, we should go no further than his own pupil Aristotle; who on some accounts would the more fitly represent to us this one special point of contrast, from his large agreement with his master in other respects. But in these two contemporaries the divergence of tendency which we desire to notice is too near its commencement to be very striking and conspicuous: their respective doctrines concerning the divine principle of thought in the universe stand at a less distance than it is in their nature to attain; and if we would observe the difference in its full extent, it is better to remove into a widely separated age, where the real inner contrast is softened and concealed by no affinities of place and culture. Indeed, the remark applies generally to the comparison of Plato and Aristotle. Whoever has been accustomed to regard their names as representing two diametrically opposed directions of the human mind, the mystical and the practical, abstract speculation and concrete experience, poetical faith and sceptical analysis, will probably be astonished to find, on close study of their own writings, how much less ground there is than he had expected, in the substance of their doctrines, for this competing position at the head of extreme Schools; and it is well if, trusting the tradition of rivalry more than his own perception of extensive agreement, he does not (with Whately and others) mistake Aristotle for a Nominalist, and confound his polemic against

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Plato's εἴδη with an approval of the modern sensational theory of classification. The opposition of these great philosophers in the general direction of their genius is no doubt real; but in their own persons and writings it was not half developed. If in the *form* of their works (which differ as a drama from a memorandum-book) it is wholly expressed, in the structure of their schemes of doctrine it is much less evident; and probably no Athenian contemporary ever set them before his imagination in that sharp antithesis to which the history of philosophy has consigned them. Considerable as the conscious difference was, the unconscious was far greater; and could only unfold itself with time, as the seeds of their thought fructified in minds congenial with their characteristics but devoid of their comprehensiveness. As my object is not that of the historian, to trace the mutations of doctrine in their genesis, but of the comparative critic, to find them in their full maturity, it will be better to change the scene at once to modern times; and though examples of the Immanent scheme crowd upon us, we cannot hesitate in our selection. The quiet, systematic, unshrinking Spinoza has claims upon us which no other name can bring; his theory occupying a unique position in metaphysics; his influence being greater now than ever; and the very faintness of his personality being in a sort of mysterious harmony with his system, and holding our eye unmoved as on the ghostly presence of a thinking piece of space. Early in this century it was the fashion to treat his name with contempt, and dismiss his work with a critical expression of amazement and horror; and Dugald Stewart reflects on Paulus, the learned editor of Spinoza, for his audacity, being a Doctor of Theology, in lending his sanction to such an impious writer;—surely an unworthy reproach, which would apply no less to Bentley and Creech and Munro for their labours on Lucretius, and to Franklin for translating Lucian. The reaction in the present day is proportionally violent; and a paradoxical admiration is directed on a system which, rightly understood, responds to no enthusiasm, pretends to no

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beauty but that of cold consistency, and maintains no higher attitude than that of serene neutrality towards all that is and happens in heaven and earth. It is a strange but unquestionable fact that in the fervour of young doubt and mental need the precise and passionless propositions of the Ethica, —the severest of all books,—have often been seized with an intense eagerness. It is perhaps that the hottest fever loves the coldest drink. The account which I must give of Spinoza will be unaffected by either the horror of the older writers or the homage of the younger generation. His influence is a fact, and his system a very curious phenomenon, in the history of philosophy; nor can they be ignored without leaving blank vast latitudes on the map of human thought.

To interpret him aright, we must study him, not in isolation, but as completing a contemporary tendency, which had other and less perfect representatives.

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CHAPTER I.

DESCARTES.

§ 1. *From Monism to Dualism.*

We cannot, however, leap down at once from the Academy to the Hague, as if they were contiguous spots. The transition is great from the genius of the Attic speculation to that of the revived philosophy of the seventeenth century; and could be accomplished only through the discipline and preparation of an intermediate period,—viz. that of the medieval and scholastic learning, essentially different from both. The difference which separates each of these ages from the other in the spirit of its culture may be presented in various ways, no one of which, taken by itself, gives any complete expression of the whole; but, for our present purpose, the following statement will perhaps adequately serve. The speculative curiosity of men moves about through the circle of three great objects, God, Nature, and the Soul, and is ever attempting to determine the relations subsisting among these. The problem is beset with peculiar difficulty because, while its terms are three, human thought does not readily deal with more than two, but has ever a tendency to place its objects in antithesis, and finds them more intelligible when they are withdrawn into opposite foci and shed the light of contrast on each other. Thus a dualism of the intellect has to play with a triad of intelligibles; and the effect is always thus far the same, that one of the three objects is thrown into logical subordination; being either silently absorbed into one of the other two, so as not to receive its due rights; or else left outside them both, unprovided with any definite inner relation to either, and

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taking an uncertain chance of recognition at all. It will be found that the several periods of philosophical development award this secondary position to a different object; and apply accordingly a different antithesis as the key to the interpretation of existence. The Greeks engaged themselves with the relations of God and the Cosmos, and dealt with man as not separate from these; the Christian Church was absorbed in the relation of God and Man, and treated Nature as subservient and accidental; while modern speculation investigates the relations of Man and Nature,—subject and object,—either identifying God with the latter, or conceiving of Him as essentially external to both. The human element, the cosmical, and the Divine has each in turn failed of its just rights. With this general formula the phenomena of the successive periods will be found, I believe, to accord.

If it be thought paradoxical to describe the Hellenic age as so occupied with settling terms between the universe and God as to leave human nature to take its chance, I would only recall the fact that all its philosophical problems turned upon the omnipresent antithesis of the *real* and the *phenomenal*, εἶναι and γίγνεσθαι; and that of these, the former, comprising the uncreated and eternal datum of being, is the Greek equivalent for *God;* while the latter, including whatever has come up instead of being ever there, corresponds with our sphere of *Nature*. Between these two claimants man was divided; his reason belonging to the divine, and his body with its senses to the transient realm. He was not therefore recognised as a third term at all, but lost his individuality by suffering partition between the two remaining extremes. This is quite consistent with the peculiar *humanism* of the Greeks, and that lively anthropological view of nature which leads them to regard nothing as dead and inexpressive, but to discern beneath the veil of matter the movement and meaning of thought and feeling like our own. For, the divine principle which penetrated the whole organism of things had its fullest realisation in man, the blossom and crown of the world, the culminating effort of

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poetic and demiurgic power. The intention and significance therefore of the grand Cosmos was most distinctly reflected in this fair miniature; and whoever would carry into nature the true idea by which to read off the lineaments must fetch it from the life of men. As this was the point to which the evolution of being tended, this gave the solution to the whole process; and to read the universe backward from humanity was to apprehend its drift, and bring its thick and confused utterance into just the clear articulate music which lay ineffectually at its heart. Hence it was that the Greeks, instead of stripping Nature of all spiritual attributes, found its essence in these alone, and communed with it as a living being, replete with anthropomorphic gods. It was not because they took their stand on the human soul as any cardinal point of departure for their philosophy; but because it was to them the nearest and most perfect form assumed by the one eternal thought beaming through the features of the world.

Of the two antithetic terms in the Greek philosophy, one only was *real and self-subsisting;* and that one was *Ideal; Thought* as opposed to that which it has to penetrate and mould. The other, corresponding to our 'Nature,' was in itself phenomenal, *un*real, without any permanent footing, having no predicates that held true for two moments together; in short, redeemed from negation only by indwelling realities appearing through. Nothing in itself, it was the mere condition of manifestation to that which alone is real, but else were latent. Hence, the Greek has no power of resting in the conception either of mind without visible organism, or of matter without mental expression. The one was to them only a logical abstraction,—reality construed back into its own empty possibility; the other, a nonentity to which we resort when we want to *deny*, instead of to affirm, being. Their genius flew at once to *form*, as the indispensable means of fetching up reality into thought; and had recourse to matter only as the medium of form; and when it had served this purpose, they dismissed all else it

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had to say to them into non-existence, as being nothing to them. *Nature* therefore had no separate metaphysical element for them; take out of it the divine indwelling idea, and nothing remained but the phenomenal flow of unreality.

The modern philosophy is in striking distinction from the ancient on this point. Its Realism is not *single*, confined to the intellectual pole of the universe; but *double*, opposing mind and matter as two substantive existences; the latter, the basis of phenomena as they occur; the former, the basis of phenomena as felt and known. We have no longer the one *divine* intellect, constituting at once the meaning in nature and the mind in man, and supplying the sole positive existence and causality whether within us or without; and then, opposed to this, only the negation of being (τὸ μὴ ὄν), the blank realm without which causality would want a theatre of self-display; but we hear of (1) the human intellect, known to us as the ground of the thoughts we have, (2) external *Body*, as the ground of the attributes and changes we observe; both equally *real;* neither before or after the other; bearing the same fundamental relation to the phenomena they issue; and having parallel rights to recognition in their respective spheres. The materialism which Plato opposed was accordingly quite different from the system known in modern times under the same name. Heracleitus resolved everything into the flow of perpetual change, and denied all abiding existence; and as he thus provided no source whence change could come, and gave a doctrine of motion with nothing to be moved, he laid his system open to the refutation of Plato and Aristotle, that he constituted everything out of nothing, and used the negative element of the universe,—the mere condition of its development,—as its positive equivalent. There was nothing in the prevalent doctrines of the time to prevent Plato from describing what we should call *matter* by purely privative terms, and treating it as being to reality in nature what denial is to affirmation in logic; from identifying all *causality* with *thought*, and assuming that to trace the

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vestiges of dynamic action in the world was to follow the steps of the divine intellect. On the other hand, modern materialism, though often affecting to resolve everything into phenomena, is penetrated throughout with the notion of *force and causation* quite distinct from thought, and of *body* as substantive existence removed from negation at least as far as mind. With Descartes we enter upon the true era of metaphysical dualism, in which philosophy, developing itself from pure self-reflection, and no longer from *à priori* deduction, recognises and equipoises, as having parallel and original rights, matter and mind, spiritual and corporeal substance. Even where, as in Empedocles and his school, we find among the Greeks the modern *positive* notion of matter, it is not as the *companion* but as the *substitute* of the positive notion of intellect; and the only question was, whether the one principle out of which everything was to be evolved should be regarded as corporeal or intellectual. Monism constituted the universal assumption of the ancient philosophy; the genius of the Ionic races leading them to explain everything by deduction from the *material* of which it is made; while that of the Doric people resorted to the determining power of *form;* the first tending to physical atheism; the other to intellectual pantheism. At whichever end the primal reality was sought, the other was contrasted with it as dependent and unreal. The balance of independent prerogative was first held even in modern philosophy, when nature was brought into antithesis with man rather than with God.

Of the intermediate period of Catholic culture it is needless to prove, that it was mainly concerned in investigating the relations between Man and God. I would only observe that it vindicated the independent reality of both these terms; attributing to the human soul a free-will which rendered it a separate entity and gave it a sphere of its own. To settle and harmonise the relations between these two beings, to mediate between them in their opposition, and preserve them distinct in their union, was the great problem

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of the universe, to the interests of which nature and events were wholly subordinate. In its service, physical laws became flexible, and matter itself pliant and transparent; the natural gave way to the supernatural; the universe placing itself at disposal as its theatre and witness. The Church paid no respect to the material world as having any irrefragable rights or even subsistence of its own: it was but the fabric and manifestation of a divine power ever free to mould it to special purposes and divert its customary ways: it had nothing to oppose to God and the human soul, when they were intent on finding each other out. Thus the Greek intermingling of God and nature, the identification of their energies, was not contradicted,—rather was it adopted,—by the medieval Christian theory: the Hellenic monism was, so far, transmitted unimpaired. But man was snatched from a like absorption, and set up in separate prerogative and trust. The transition therefore to a dualistic philosophy began upon the moral side. The liberties which the Church took with her neglected element, —the realm of nature,—provoked a reaction on its behalf; and in vindicating the inflexible certainty of external law, modern science converted the dualism from moral to physical, and fixed the poles of primary belief in the mind which perceives and the universe which is the object of perception.

§ 2. *Theory of the Order of Knowing.*

The modern dualism, which assigns an equal ontological reality to mind and matter, a conscious self, and unconscious other-than-self, obtained its first distinct expression in Descartes; whose fundamental notions must be apprehended as an indispensable condition for the understanding of Spinoza. Those who have heard nothing of Descartes but his celebrated inference, *Cogito, ergo sum*, and who are aware that this was the point of departure for his whole system, may be surprised at the assertion that he was a dualist, and placed a second entity on the same line with this primitive

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Ego. On the same line of *certain knowledge*, he did not; but on the same line of *positive existence*, he did. For there is in his philosophy a curious want of correspondence between the logical order in which thought steps from truth to truth, and the real order in which the objects of knowledge stand *inter se*.

His theory about the order of certainty in human knowledge is perhaps best understood by its contrast, probably intentional, with that of Bacon, who had passed from the scene eleven years (1626) before Descartes' first publication (Essays, 1637). The methodised observations and experiments on which the English philosopher relied for the discovery of truth rested ultimately upon Perception by the senses: they were entrusted with the ingathering of those primary facts whence, by successive generalisations, laws of widening scope were read off and carried into the interpretation of the world; so that the maxim of the schools was still unchallenged, that 'in the Understanding there can be nothing but the prior experience of Sense.' This fundamental principle Descartes disputes at the outset[1]. He insists that in the 'evidence of our Senses' and the vividness of our representations there is no security against illusion: a person with the jaundice sees all things yellow: the stars give us no true report of their size; and the images of our dreams are not less distinct than those of waking vision, and perfectly simulate reality. In this field of outward perception, therefore, it is always possible that we may be deceived; and all that it gives us needs to be tested by some principle of certainty more deeply seated in the Reason.

In order to find this ultimate ground, the only way is to push your scepticism to the utmost limits of possibility, and suppose everything false which admits of being questioned: whatever then remains, when denial has done its worst, must be the immutable base of certainty. Following this rule, I may doubt the presence of external things, including my own body, and say to myself, 'Perhaps it is all a dream:'

[1] Disc. de la Méthode, Cousin. I. 163.

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I may distrust my reasonings, even about mathematical quantities, seeing that geometers themselves are at times entrapped into paralogisms: I may suspend my belief in the existence of God as a probability that may be differently estimated. But, though all else be in doubt, *my doubts* at least are matters of certainty: I cannot both have them and deny them; and in knowing them as mine, I know that I exist; 'je pense, donc je suis.' In other words, the consciousness of Self as the subject of thought is the primary certainty. Let thoughts remain, I am sure of the thinker: take them away, and though all else they had imagined be really there, both it and I lie in the dark for me. 'Thus I learn that I am a substantive being, whose nature or essence it is *to think;* and to have, for its existence, no need of place or of any material thing; so that this Self,—i. e. Soul,—whereby I am what I am, is entirely distinct from body, and is even more easily known than body, and would not cease to be what it is though body were not[1].'

Having gained this first certainty, Descartes submits it to scrutiny in order to discover what is the feature in it which constitutes its assured truth; once found, the same feature will serve as a general criterion of truth in other instances. He decides that what makes me sure of the proposition 'I think, therefore I am,' is simply that I see clearly it must be so; and hence lays down a rule, that things which we conceive very clearly and distinctly are all true; only that there is some difficulty in accurately determining those which really possess this mark. Thus, with Descartes, the ultimate test of truth is intrinsic, not extrinsic; an idea authenticates itself by its own clearness and distinctness, and does not depend on any external voucher. This is an important element of the whole Cartesian logic.

In advancing to the next certainty, Descartes takes as his clue the contrast between his doubts and his assurance. He is aware that to know is a higher condition than to

[1] Disc. de la Méthode, Cousin. I. 158–9, 332.

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doubt; that the latter state is a mark of imperfection, and that in seeking to remove it and conceiving of a mind without it, he has the idea of a nature exempt from the limits of his own. Whence this idea? Does it rank with his other ideas, of the heavens, the earth, the light, the heat, and other outward things? Not so; for in these he sees nothing superior to himself; so that, if these be true ideas, they may be due to his own thinking nature as an organ of truth; and if not true, he has them without valid tenure, in virtue of some defect in himself. Does the idea then come from himself? That cannot be; for it is more perfect than he; and can no more therefore depend upon the less perfect than from nothing can something proceed. The only remaining possibility must be admitted as the real fact; it is implanted by a nature having in itself all the perfection of which he conceives; i. e. by God. There is necessarily therefore a perfect being on whom we depend, and from whom we have our all. In order to know God, as far as our nature admits, we have only to ask respecting any attribute, whether to possess it is an element of perfection or of imperfection; and to admit or reject it accordingly. This rule excludes from His nature all such mental conditions as doubt, inconstancy, sadness. And that our ideas of material things are not to be applied to Him appears from this; that they are totally foreign to an intellectual nature, and represent properties which could be combined with such a nature only by composition; and since composition is in itself an evidence of dependence, and dependence a mark of defect, God cannot be composed of two natures; but, if there be in the world bodies, or minds that are not perfect, they must depend upon His power, so as to be unable without Him to subsist for an instant. Thus Descartes obtains his second certainty, the existence of God. This, like the former, he regards as *immediately* given, or *self-evident* from the idea, without going beyond for proof or verification; a grade of certainty which can go no further.

In order to see, however, whether it may not be pushed

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through one step more, he next addresses himself to geometrical relations as the reputed models of certainty in objects of outward apprehension. The fundamental conception is here that of continuous body, or of space indefinitely extended in length, breadth, and depth, divisible into parts different in size and shape, and variously moveable. On going over some of the simpler demonstrations, Descartes found that the special certainty lay in the necessary sequence of ideas within the structure of the proofs, and not in the data whence they start; in other words, that it is *hypothetical*, not absolute; showing, for example, *that if there be a triangle*, its three angles will be equal to two right angles; but not that there is such a thing as a triangle in the world. This is quite different from the case of the Divine nature; the existence of that nature is not hypothetical; but is involved in the idea we have of a perfect being, precisely as in the idea of a sphere is involved the equal distance of all points on its surface from its centre.

Hence, the existence of outward things, even in the geometric form, has no metaphysical certainty, like that of the two previous cases; and could never be freed from doubt until we presuppose the existence of God. If we suppose ourselves better assured of the existence of the earth, the stars, and our own bodies, than of God and the Soul, we delude ourselves by an irrational confidence in the impressions of Sense; for we can give no reason, if the universe be without a God, for trusting our waking images in preference to those of our dreams, in which we seem to have a different body and to see other earth and stars. The very rule that our clear and distinct ideas are true rests on the assumption that these ideas come from a perfect being and are His gift of truth; while ideas which have not this character, but are confused, are false, because *coming from nothing*, i. e. because due to our *defect of being*; for imperfection and falsity cannot come from God, any more than perfection can come from nothing. However clear and distinct our ideas, we could not treat them as certainly true,

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but for the prior knowledge of the perfection whence they come.

This knowledge once gained, our dreams no longer affect us with any distrust of our clear and distinct waking thoughts. For, if the same sort of clear and distinct ideas, e. g. a geometric demonstration, occurred in a dream, it would not thereby lose its truth; and if, on the other hand, the mere lively images of a dream deceived us, they are apt also to practise the same deception on us when we are awake. In either state our imagination leads us wrong, our reason leads us right. But this distinction holds only because the former is a residue of defect, while the latter is a faculty secured on the veracity of a perfect being[1].

This rule, however, still does not avail to justify our belief in external things, unless they can be rescued from the field of sense and imagination (to which they have been hitherto referred), and shown to be in some way the objects of clear and distinct ideas. To this task accordingly Descartes addresses himself next. Besides the clear and distinct idea which I have of myself as a thinking being (wherein the essence of me consists), I find in myself another idea, perfectly distinct from this, of body as an extended thing which does not think; and since distinctness of idea means distinctness of fact, it is certain that my soul as thinking essence is independent of my body and can exist without it. Thus the idea of extension, co-existing with that of thought, yet in clear distinction from it, vouches for the reality as external.

Again, when from the pure idea of the Ego I turn to its special ways of acting, I find a variety of powers, e.g. sense and imagination, which are not necessary to constitute the idea of myself, but which, on the other hand, are themselves inconceivable without that idea: they are a kind of thought, and are related to me as a modification of my essence. Similarly, I am conscious of change of place and power of movement, which are inconceivable as unattached pheno-

[1] Disc. de la Méthode, 4^me^ P. I. 160–6.

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mena, and imply in their idea some body or extended substance to which they happen. Thus, motion discloses itself as a mode of matter, like sense and imagination as modes of mind.

Moreover, I undoubtedly have in me a passive susceptibility of ideas of sensible things; which involve *somewhere* an active power of producing these ideas: where is it? not in me; for these ideas come without my having anything to do with them, and presuppose no thought of mine. Therefore it is in some substance other than myself, viz. either from God or some superior created nature which has the ideas *eminenter;* or from bodies which have them *formaliter.* Not the former; because if God thus gave them without enabling me to know it, and even with a natural disposition to refer them to corporeal objects, he would be deceiving me; therefore they must be actually given me by external bodies. This conclusion, however, must be limited to what is clear and distinct in them, and not extended to the part of the sensible impression which is obscure and confused; i.e. it holds good for all that comes under the cognisance of geometry, viz. the relations of space and its dimensions.

Having thus obtained assurance of externality in general, Descartes uses the same argument, of the veracity of God, to establish the reality of all particular things which our nature permits us to see in it, provided only we find in ourselves the means of correcting and clearing whatever is confused in our first ideas of them. On the same ground we may trust, on the active side of our life, the natural impulses to seek this and avoid that, which arise from the union of mind with body, until we learn to substitute the rule of reason for this ruder guidance. But the mind, pure and simple, must always be applied to win clear and distinct ideas from the mixed and blind feelings to which our compound nature subjects us. If we are qualified to do this, and yet neglect it, we cannot complain that our nature deceives us. If, for example, we take up at once with the belief that the space around us is empty, when we see and feel nothing in it, or

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that there is a resemblance between heat as existing in the fire and heat as felt in us, we have only ourselves to blame and not God, who has given us the means of knowing better. His veracity is engaged no further than the universal, permanent, and inevitable beliefs imposed upon us by our nature[1].

In the order of thought, therefore, we know (1) our own existence as thinking beings; (2) the existence of God, as given in thought; and both of these are *immediately* known; and then (3) material things, given to us in mixed experience, and vouched for by the divine perfection; therefore *mediately* known.

§ 3. *Theory of the Order of Being.*

When we address ourselves to the existences thus ascertained, we may range them all under the name *Substance;* not, however, in precisely one and the same sense. For this word is defined, 'That which so exists as to need only itself for its existence.' In strictness this holds good only of God; for everything else stands in need of Him every moment for the continuance of its existence,—a need recognised in the established phrase, *Concursus Dei.* But to created natures the word may be applied in a *relative* sense, when any one of them exists without need of any other, and so has its tenure from the divine concurrence alone. 'Hence,' says Descartes, 'the Schoolmen are right in saying that the name "substance" is not *univocal*[2] in regard to

[1] Meditation 6me I. 331-343.

[2] This is an example of an unfortunate abuse of the epithet *univocal*, —an abuse not the less confusing from its frequency and long standing. The Latin *Univocus* and *Æquivocus* are translations of Aristotle's pair, *συνώνυμος* and *ὁμώνυμος*, which are applied by him never to *words* but always to *things*. Those things are *synonymous* or *univocal* which bear the same name in the same sense (or with the same definition); while those things are *homonymous* or *æquivocal* which bear the same name in a different sense (or with different definition). Thus, a dog and a cat are univocal, as coming under the term 'animal' in the same sense; the constellation *Ursa* and a certain animal in the Zoological Gardens are æquivocal, as both being called *bear*, but in a different

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God and His creatures, i.e. there is no distinctly conceived meaning of the word which fits at once Him and them; but since, among created things, there are some of such a nature as to be incapable of existence without others, we distinguish these from such as need only the ordinary *concursus Dei*, by calling the latter *substances*, and the former *qualities or attributes* of these substances[1].'

By this rule, though neither mind nor body can claim to be Substance in the absolute sense, both are on a par as substances in the relative sense; each, we perceive, being able to exist without aid from the other. Whether either of them is in actual existence here or there, now or then, can be determined only by its proclaiming itself through some properties that speak to our perceptions or consciousness: *then* we know it, for if there be properties, they cannot be properties of Nothing, but of something. *Any* property will suffice to betray the presence of a substance; but there is always one in particular which constitutes its essence, and on which all the rest depend. Thus, in the case of Body, Extension in its three dimensions of length, breadth, and depth is the defining attribute; in the case of Mind, Thought: on the former depend figure with all its relations, and motion with its varieties of direction and velocity, and (as Descartes assumes) every other property of material things; on the latter, memory, imagination, will, &c., as so many modifications of thinking. Of these two created substances we have clear and distinct ideas, if we keep the attributes carefully apart from each other. And so may we of uncreated and independent thinking substance, i.e. of God, provided we neither assume that this idea represents all that there is in Him, nor attach to it any fiction of our

sense. But this classification of *things* is constantly treated by logicians and others (e. g. by Whately) as if it were a classification of *words or names*; and so Descartes uses it here. If this interpretation be carried to the reading of Aristotle, he becomes unintelligible. See Arist. Cat. I. p. i. a. 1; Top. IV. iii. p. 123 a. 28, vi. p. 127 b. 6; Eth. Nicom. V. iv. p. 1130 a. 33.

[1] Princ. Phil. P. I. 51.

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understanding which is incompatible with perfection of being.

There is a difference insisted on by Descartes between the qualities or modes of a substance on the one hand, and its attributes on the other. We never speak of the qualities or modes of *God;* and the reason is that these words imply *change and diversity*, like the phenomena which distinguish one species from another of the same genus; and this cannot be predicated of an infinite and eternal being. All that is in Him is immutably there; and this relation of *inherence* and permanent coexistence in one nature is expressed by the word *attribute.* This alone therefore can be used of God; and even in the case of created things we resort to it when we wish to mark what they *invariably* have, such as their 'existence' and duration. Observe, however, that Descartes reckons the 'existence' of 'a thing' as *one among its attributes*, and not as *that which all attributes presuppose.* In this an important fallacy lies hid.

Descartes further distinguishes between qualities or attributes belonging to things themselves, and those which are merely creatures of our thought, varieties in our mode of looking at them. To exemplify this distinction he takes the predicates *duration* and *time;* the former he plants in the thing which endures; the latter he treats as merely relative to us, as the way we have of thinking about that duration. The only reason which he assigns is the following: 'We do not conceive the duration of moving things to be other than that of things stationary; as is evident from the fact that, if two bodies are in motion for an hour, the one fast and the other slow, we do not credit the one with more time than the other, though we suppose more motion in one of the two. But in order to bring the duration of all things under one and the same measure, we usually resort to the duration of certain regular movements that form days and years, and call it time after having thus compared it; though in fact what we so call is nothing over and above the real duration of the things but a way of

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thinking[1].' This doctrine of the subjectivity of Time, which reappears in Spinoza, derives so little support from these illustrations, that it seems to me to be rather refuted by them. If the quick and the slow hands of a clock occupy the same time between 12 and 1, and are so conceived by us, our thought makes no difference between time and duration; and if the cycles of the heavenly bodies which we take as our standards of time are identical with portions of planetary duration, and understood by us to be so, then where the time is there the duration must be; and there is no ground for setting one of them to the credit of our thought, and planting the other in the outward objects. The difference is adequately expressed by saying, that duration is a continuum and time the segment of it occupied by finite objects and phenomena.

§ 4. *Conception of Matter.*

In treating separately of his two created Substances, Descartes vindicates in the first instance his conception of matter, which lies at the foundation of his system of Physics. He is aware that his resolution of it into simple extension will appear paradoxical, and answers his objectors by anticipation. To those who cannot part with the idea of *solidity* (or 'hardness') from their conception of body, he remarks that this quality is evidenced only by touch and resistance to movement; that if, on applying the hand to a body here or there, it gave way and let the hands pass on without a check, no solidity would be perceived, and yet, so long as the body kept its dimensions, it would be acknowledged as a thing in that place; there is no reason therefore for saying that by so behaving it had lost that which made it body. The same holds of its weight, its heat, its colour; we can think of it as without any of these qualities, and yet we should know clearly and distinctly that it has all it wants to make it body, while its dimensions remain.

[1] Princ. Phil. P. I. 57.

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When it is objected that the same body, if rarefied, is more extended than if condensed, without any change in its essence, Descartes replies that rarefaction is inconceivable without more bodies than one; since it implies a separation of particles to a distance not embraced in it before, i.e. the existence or increase of interstices between them, which are occupied by some other body, and therefore belong to *its* extension and not to that of the containing body. Thus there is no change in the total dimensions of the original, but only a displacement of its component items; and in condensation the story is simply inverted. The case is similar to that of a sponge, now distended by absorbing water, and now compressed by expelling its contents: the increment and decrement of the external superficies belongs, not to the sponge, but to the water. It involves a contradiction to suppose that a thing can be enlarged by a size which it does not possess; or that you can reduce its size without reducing itself. In truth, there is no difference between the largeness of a thing and the thing that is large.

Hence, there can be no such thing as empty space. As *Nothing* cannot possibly have extension, wherever extension is, there must be *something* extended; and all that we mean when we speak of any place as *empty* is, that it has not its usual contents; e.g. a jug is said to be empty when it has no water, though it is full of air; and a ship, when it has no cargo; and a house, when it has no inhabitants or furniture. From observing that there is no necessary connection between a vessel's capacity and the nature of its contents, which may be quicksilver, or milk, or gas, we fancy that God could exclude everything from it, and keep it as it is, without replacing the body removed by any other. But, though there is no necessary connection between the capacity of a bowl and any particular kind of matter, there is a necessary connection between the *concavity* of the bowl's internal superficies and the outside *convexity* of the form which it embraces, just as there cannot be a mountain without a

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valley; and as *Nothing* cannot be convex, or have any form or extension whatever, there must be an extended somewhat, i.e. matter, inside. The answer therefore is, that, were the supposition realised, of God's removing all contents, the sides now apart from each other would be in contact; for to say that they are at a distance, yet that that distance is nothing, is to affirm and deny the same thing with the same breath. On these grounds Descartes maintains the doctrine of a *plenum*, and pronounces a vacuum inconceivable[1].

Extension being adopted as the essence of body, the curious result follows, that the quantity of matter is in all cases to be measured by *bulk* and not by *mass*. No part of material substance can occupy more room at one time than at another; and a vessel filled with gold or lead has no more matter in it than when occupied by air; for the *size* of the component parts of a body does not depend on their weight and hardness, but only on the extension, which for the same vessel is always the same[2].

Similar reasoning led Descartes to the conclusion that matter as identified with extension is not resolvable into ultimate atoms, but is infinitely divisible; that it is homogeneous throughout the universe; and that its apparent varieties are distinguished only by the different division and movement of its parts. Motion is purely relative, and should not be defined in the usual way as 'change of place,' as if 'place' were any absolute datum without share in the change; but as 'the transport of a body from the vicinity of those which are in immediate contact with it to the vicinity of others.' Unless you thus name the correlative object, you allow your senses to leave you with a false conception of motion. A pilot who stands still upon a ship seems to be at rest, as long as you do not look beyond the limits of the vessel; if you are coasting within sight of land, you say he has the movement of the craft and all that is on board; if he could sail westward as fast as the earth

[1] Op. cit, P. II. 4-18. [2] Ib. 19.

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spins eastward, he would indeed make the circuit of the world, yet see the sun (within a degree) stationary in the heavens: and so he is at once in motion and at rest, according to the confines with which you choose to compare him; and, for exactitude's sake, these confines should be named [1].

The total amount of motion and rest in the universe Descartes assumes to be a constant quantity, assigned by God's omnipotence to the parts of matter at its creation; all the observed variations in velocity being local, and marking the transference of motion from one object to another. In describing this transference, Descartes adheres to his paradoxical measure of matter by bulk instead of mass; and says, 'when a portion of matter moves twice as fast as another, and this other is twice as large as the first, we are to think that there is just as much motion in the smaller as in the larger; and as often and as much as the motion of one part diminishes, does that of another (proportionately) increase.' The laws of motion, like its quantity, are unchangeable, in virtue of the divine immutability. It is not necessary to follow Descartes' enumeration of them. The first of them alone has some interest in connection with Spinoza; it runs thus: 'each particular thing persists in the same state as far as it can, and never changes it but by the impact of others;' and is supported by the consideration that rest and motion are contrary, and that a thing cannot possibly be carried by the instincts of its nature to what is opposite to itself [2].

§ 5. *Relation between Body and Soul.*

In the human person the Physics and the Psychology of Descartes, long kept asunder as the history of separate substances, are obliged to meet and divide, if they can, their rightful domains; no easy task for the keenest surveyor, entangled as the territories are by numerous interlocking

[1] Op. cit. II. 22–28. [2] Ib. 36, 37.

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regions. Starting with the principle that mind and body are 'entirely and truly distinct,' so that in no case can body be mind and perform the thinking function, he provides two categories, and only two, between which all phenomena are to be distributed. Yet, when he comes to treat of perception through the senses, and of imagination, he is obliged, on the one hand, to accept them as modes of thinking, and, on the other, to admit that they could not exist without body; not the senses, because they are themselves a part of the corporeal organism; not the imagination, because the images which it gives involve extension. Instead, however, of lodging these phenomena under a third head, he regards them as a confused mixture of the other two, due to the close union in which mind and body live together in our nature; and sets himself to the task of analysing the compound process, so as to clear the intellectual from the physical elements, and let body and mind each have its own.

The soul, i.e. the thinking principle, though united with the whole body, exercises its chief functions in the brain; where, besides its own processes of pure understanding, it imagines and perceives; the medium of its sensations being nerves running from its seat in the brain to every part of the body. The movements propagated from the peripheral extremities to the central spot excite different sensations, partly according as the nerves are different, partly as the motion in the same nerve is of a different kind. Descartes enumerates seven distinct senses; two interior, of which one is the vehicle of hunger and thirst and the natural appetites generally, and has appropriated to it the nerves from the alimentary and other corresponding organs; and the second is the minister of joy, sorrow, love, anger, and the other 'passions' (i.e. involuntary feelings), and depends chiefly on a small nerve going to the heart, while others pass to the diaphragm and its vicinity. The different state of the blood affects these nerves with different kinds of motion: if it be pure and well tempered, it quickens

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their sensibility, and gives them an action which excites natural joy in the soul; if it be gross and sluggish, a heavier movement ensues which carries a feeling of depression to the soul. And whenever, from any other cause than the state of the blood, these different movements are imparted, the corresponding feeling will recur. When, for example, we contemplate the arrival of some good, this imagination does not, Descartes says, in itself carry the feeling of joy, but sends 'the animal spirits' on an errand from the brain down the muscles to the insertion of the heart-nerves; which are then, through dilatation of its cavities, affected by the special motion felt as joy at the head-quarters of the soul. This joyous sensation, however, is to be distinguished from another and 'purely intellectual' joy of which the soul *per se* is susceptible: if we are told a piece of news, the soul first considers whether it is good or bad; if good, then is it affected by 'a spiritual joy,' so completely independent of bodily changes that the Stoics did not deny it to their 'Wise man,' exempt though he was to be from every passion. But, as soon as this joy passes from the understanding to the imagination, the process is set a-going, as just described, which terminates in the *sensational* consciousness. This may serve as a sample of what Descartes invariably means by *the passions* of the soul; they are all of them states of confused consciousness which the soul would not have of itself alone, but which, being incident to its union with the body, are induced by the contact of the soul with nerves of various movement. The feelings thus excited, while including, besides the natural appetites, love, hate, fear, anger, and a long list besides, are wholly different from the *desire and will* we have to eat and drink, and *the idea* we have of what is to be loved, hated, feared, &c.; though from the frequent concomitance of the passionate and the intellectual states, their names have not been kept separate[1].

The remaining, or external, senses are the five that are

[1] Op. cit. P. IV. 189, 190.

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ordinarily enumerated. On these as treated by Descartes there is nothing special to remark, unless it be that here again he attributes each separate feeling of the same sense (such as of hardness, weight, warmth, moisture,—all assigned by him to *Touch*) to a distinct variety of movement in the same nerve; and that by this quality in the external body no more is to be understood than the power in that body, whatever it be, to set on foot this or that particular movement of the nerve. The possible qualities of body are therefore simply the unknown causes of known sensations in us. Thus far only can we speak of the causes as known; they cannot be anything else in the external bodies than the different size, position, figure, and movement of their parts; but these differences we are unable to define. We are also brought upon the track of a future doctrine in the remark that, up to a certain point, an exceptional excitement given to the nerve will intensify the 'confused thought,' i.e. sensation, in the soul, and be naturally agreeable as attesting the vital force of the body which is its companion; but that ever so little added stimulus beyond this point, bringing injury to the body, reverses the sensation in the soul and turns it into distress, in sympathy with the harm that is done to the organism. Opposite feelings are thus occasioned by causes nearly identical[1].

In support of his localisation of feelings in the brain, Descartes adduces a striking case of their being experienced as if at the extremity of nerves which had been already truncated by amputation. A young girl, under treatment for a sore hand, was unable to bear the surgeon's dressing without having her eyes bandaged. When this had become habitual, it was found that, after all, she must lose the lower half of the arm. The operation was performed without her discovering that there was anything unusual; and the loss was concealed from her by arranging long folds of linen into the semblance of an arm and hand. In this state of things she continued to complain of a variety of

[1] Op. cit. P. IV. 191, 198.

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pains now in one, now in another, of the fingers that were gone; doubtless because the remaining section of the shortened nerves were affected by the kind of motion appropriate to these sensations and previously started at the finger ends. This early mention of a fact now familiar deserves to be remembered[1].

By thus lodging the Soul in the brain at the very seat of the *Sensus communis*, where the nerve movements are delivered and whence the animal spirits carry understanding and impulse to the muscles, Descartes set up a compound being, from one or other of whose parts all our phenomena might seem to be explained. But the *Soul* he pronounced to be exclusively human, and, in the human being, a substance 'entirely distinct' from the body. Take away then the soul from our double constitution, and you leave the animal nature complete; to understand which we must consider what elements, previously present, fall out by this subtraction. Up to the cerebral centre, the nervous changes were purely mechanical, initiated by movements in external bodies, or by heat and fluid action in the blood, propagated by the constitution of the nervous filaments themselves. And if there followed any motion of the corporeal members, this also was the mechanical result of a descending current of animal spirits flowing down through the muscles. But what happens at the meeting point between this up and down transaction? It was the presence of the soul that turned the nerve movements into sensations, and the sensations that constituted the passions, and the passions that wakened the instinctive energies manifest in all involuntary action; and Descartes habitually speaks of the *passions* of 'the soul,' and of the *Sense experience* as belonging to it. If then you subtract the soul, must not sensation, passion, instinct, vanish too? This inevitable consequence was accepted by the followers of Descartes, and apparently by himself when he pronounced the lower animals to be mere '*automata*,' in whose nature processes which go forward

[1] Op. cit. P. IV. 196.

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consciously in us were simulated by a clock-like mechanism. And no doubt a coherent conception can be formed of the make of an animal after this pattern, if only it fitted as well to the facts of natural history as the usual doctrine which lets the creatures feel. As by the reflex arrangement of the sensory and motory nerves, and their susceptibility of unfelt stimulus, you can galvanise a paralysed or dead animal into various coordinated movements, there are doubtless resources in nature for extending such experiments till earth, air, and water become a vast Polytechnic exhibition of running, grinning, and roaring automata. The Cartesians actually supposed themselves to be living in such a world; and pleaded the doctrine as a good answer to those who thought it too bad that the sin of our first parents should have brought suffering and death upon the innocent beasts of the field; and used it also as an excuse for taking cruel liberties with their dumb companions who had only *sham feelings*. But Descartes himself did not mean to carry his denial so far as this: he was too well aware of the close analogy between the actions of the inferior animals and our own *instinctive life* (which we know at first hand to be anything but insensible), to strip them of what remains to us in this part of our nature; and meant to withhold from them not sensibility, but self-consciousness alone; to say that, while they see, and feel, and hear, they do not *know* that they do so, or reflect upon what it means, but are carried impulsively to the appropriate objects or through the appropriate experience. He speaks of their 'cries of joy or pain;' and of 'acting on their hopes and fears of bodily pleasure or pain; which is the principle of all training of animals.' 'All the things that you make dogs or horses or monkeys do are only movements of their fear, their hope, or their joy, which can be made without any thought[1].' Again, he says of animals, 'all make pronounced natural movements *of anger, fear, hunger, and the like;* and speaks of 'the signs which dogs make with their tails' as being 'only

[1] Œuvres, IX. pp. 423–5.

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the movements *which accompany the affections*[1].' Nay, he carefully disclaims the very opinion which, strangely enough, has come to be regarded as one of his chief characteristics: 'I must observe,' he says, 'that it is *of thought*, and *not of life or feeling*, that I speak; for I do not deny life to any animal, making it only consist of the heart's heat; nor do I refuse them *sensation*, so far as it depends on the organs of the body[2].

It is obvious, therefore, that even with respect to the lower animals, *the modern doctrine of automatism*, viz. that the observed action of the organism is complete without feeling, and in its absence would go on exactly as in its presence, receives no support from Descartes. Far from treating sensibility as a superfluous appendage to a mechanical process, and as leading to nothing, he treats it as the sole instrument for moulding dependent creatures to our will; thus not only recognising its existence, but acknowledging its physical power. The utmost that can be said is that, if he had thoroughly carried out his dualistic antithesis of extension and thinking, he ought to have reached the conclusion that the body could go of itself and sit free of the mind. No doubt his logic got a fall when he stumbled on the phenomenon of animal feeling, which he could not resolve into 'extension,' and which yet came short of 'thinking.' Not knowing what to do with it, he awards it sometimes to the corporeal, at others to the mental nature; but in any case allows it efficient power in the direction of living activities. No such weakness of conception can be charged upon our modern automatists who profess to carry out his doctrine. With severe consistency they dispense, in their human physiology, with every form of consciousness, be it feeling or be it thought; treating it as altogether outside the dynamics of life,—an ornamental flourish of Nature's pen as she finishes her story, adding nothing to its significance, and opening no new chapter for its sequel. Whether the wavering lines of Descartes' doctrine are rendered truer by being thus pulled out straight, I must not stop to consider.

[1] Œuvres, X. pp. 207, 240. [2] Ib. X. pp. 207, 208.

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§ 6. *Ethical Doctrine.*

'It is the nature of substances,' says Descartes, 'that they exclude each other[1].' This mutual independence of substances seems to be forgotten as soon as Descartes treats practically of the relations between the body and the soul in the conduct of life. He divides our volitions, for instance, into 'two classes, viz. (1) pure actions of the soul, which begin and end within itself, as when we will to love God, or, generally, to apply our thought to some object which is not material; and (2) actions which terminate in our body, as when, from merely having the will to walk, it follows that our legs move and we walk[2].' 'The will,' he says in another proposition, 'is so free in its nature that it can never suffer restraint; and of the two kinds of volitions which I have distinguished in the soul, the first are absolutely in its own power, and can only indirectly be changed by the body; while, on the other hand, the others depend absolutely on the act which executes them, and these can only indirectly be changed by the soul, except when the soul itself is their cause. And every action of the soul consists in this; that, by merely willing something, it causes the little gland to which it is closely united to move in the way required for producing the effect contemplated by the will[3].' Here the reciprocal interaction of mind and body is not only admitted but defined. And in the assertion of Free-will we have a further important characteristic of Descartes' doctrine, which is used by him in a most characteristic way. He carries it with him into his intellectual philosophy, to explain the nature of error; he leaves it behind him in his ethical theory, which assumes the form, not of a doctrine of *Duty*, but only of a doctrine of *Good;* thus putting into it an illusory meaning, and missing its real

[1] Resp. IV. Vol. II. p. 49.
[2] Œuvres: Passions de l'âme, Art. 18, V. p. 54.
[3] Ibid. pp. 71–2, Art. 41.

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significance. We fall into errors, he supposes, because our understanding is limited and our will indefinite; that is, we choose to affirm or deny far beyond the range of our clear and distinct ideas: where the terms of a possible predication are not yet free from confusion in the understanding, the will rashly puts them together into a proposition which has only a chance of truth. It is to be observed that between understanding and will Descartes recognises no distinction of *kind*, but only this inequality of *range*: every affirmation is volition, and every volition is affirmation; but we do not credit the understanding with it except where truth is secured by clear and distinct conceptions. In short, there is no facultative plurality in the mind; it is a single organ of true judgment for all purposes, cognitive or practical; just as we have seen in Plato that νοῦς is the supreme term both of intellection and of virtue.

As both matter and mind are merely *created* substances, their separate essences and all the relations and properties therein involved are derivative; dependent on the absolute will of God for their origin and their conservation, moment by moment. But the essence of matter is extension, whose properties and relations are defined by geometry; and the essence of mind is thinking, whether intellectual or volitional; whose laws of true knowing are determined by Logic, and of right doing, by Ethics. God therefore is the author, by absolute Will, of the true and false, and of the right and wrong; and might, if he chose, have caused Euclid to be a farrago of lies, and the devil to be the model of perfection. The ideas of 'necessary truth,' and of 'immutable righteousness,' are thus exploded, and replaced by a doctrine of '*arbitrary decrees*.' Hence the will of God becomes, not the revealer, but the inventor, of moral distinctions, and has itself, as being prior to them, no moral quality, and can be the object of obedience only, and not of such homage and aspiration as the conscience renders to perfect holiness. From this conception of a Divine absolutism the Ethics of Descartes derive a peculiar character,

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which made them more acceptable to the world than to the Church of his own time. As they are matters of mere institution (*θέσει*, not *φύσει*), for the regulation of human society, and rest only on power, they scarcely rise above the prudential level, and, catching no religious fire, glow with no 'enthusiasm of humanity.' His supreme virtue,—Generosity,—is itself presented in a highly aristocratic form, in which self-appreciation and conscious dignity have at least as much concern in a mild treatment of ignorance and weakness, as any genuine sympathy and brotherhood with the children of God. And not the least curious feature of his sketch is that, although his philosophy leads him to insist on the immortality of the soul, his moral conception of human life remains wholly unaffected by this doctrine, and keeps the narrow scale and the secular colouring which it would rightly have, if there were no capacities in reserve for larger fields of being, and no perpetuity for high affections which here can only try their wings.

And yet Descartes cannot be said to have consistently carried out this conception of God, as anterior to the differentiation of truth from falsity, of right from wrong. For the idea of God which reveals His existence and expresses His essence is that of an 'entirely perfect being;' and that by 'perfect' is meant not simply '*complete*' in the sense of total reality, but 'possessed of every excellence,' is evident from this,—that it embraces *Veracity* among its contents, and is assigned as our ultimate ground of reliance on what He imparts to our thought. 'The first property of God which we have here to consider,' he says, 'consists in this, that He is absolutely true, and the Giver of all light. It is therefore impossible that He should deceive us, or, in the literal and positive sense, be the cause of our errors, to which, as experience shows, we are subject[1].' Here is a moral excellence implanted in the Divine essence itself, and therefore eternally existing; which could not be, if the very invention and creation of moral differences were acts of His

[1] Princ. Phil. P. I. § 29, Vol. III. p. 81.

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will. And the particular moral excellence which is singled out,—Veracity,—is that which implies a '*truth of things*' with which it is a perfection for the truth of inward and of communicated thought to be in exact accord; so that intellectual discrimination and faithfulness in character are at one time assumed in the infinite nature, and at another made to wait for the finite. A theory of the universe which resolves everything into the arbitrary power of the potter over his clay is deduced from the assumption of the Divine action within the limits of an eternal law of righteousness.

§ 7. *Incompatible Positions.*

When we look back upon this system as a whole, all its minor inconsistencies are lost in comparison with the fundamental variance between its doctrine of being, and its doctrine of knowledge. In the former, we are introduced to two natures, intellectual and material, of which as substances neither can have anything in common with the other, or any power of revealing it; so that, although co-present as neighbours, they are invisible to each other, and, for any mutual converse, might as well be at opposite ends of the diameter of the solar system. That our body and our mind should lodge together on these uncomfortable terms would be a sorry conclusion to a philosophy of knowledge; resolving it all into mental self-knowledge, and, beyond that, and in the field of outward objects, into universal nescience. To avoid this failure, Descartes goes aside into his logical theory, and borrows thence the idea of God which his self-scrutiny has laid open to him, and invokes it to mediate between the strangers that are waiting for an introduction to each other. From this idea in himself he can pass to the reality of God, for they are both of the same kind, viz. *thinking natures*, related moreover as effect to cause, finite conception to Infinite source. And then, finding in this Divine reality a veracity on which he can depend, and in himself a belief, imparted thence, in a body which he carries about with him

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among other bodies, he is lifted over the impassable gulf, and makes friends with his own limbs and the organism of the world. In this circuit of reasoning, however, we have no legitimate logical continuity, but an appeal carried to the supposed *ordo cognoscendi*, to reverse the sentence of the *ordo essendi*, and take away the rule of negation which had been pronounced absolute. And if the judgment be justly reversed, and it be allowed that the mind rightly supposes itself to know external things, then the doctrine proves false that thinking and extension are incapable of dealings with one another, and constitute parallel worlds that never touch. If the word 'substance' is to be seriously taken in its proper meaning as applied to all the factors of the argument, the contradictions involved are still more marked. In that case a third substance, viz. the Divine, is called in, in order to bring the other two into communication: with the effect, however, of increasing instead of resolving the difficulty; for, as substance, this third should have no contact with the others, between which he is required to mediate; while they, as substances, should need no other in order to exist and act, yet are made dependent upon Him as both their author and interpreter. In both instances, therefore, functions and relations are ascribed which are directly contradictory of the very notion of Substance. If mind and matter are derived from God, and operate only through His aid, then there is another than themselves necessary to their existence, and one mark of substantive being fails, and *they* drop out of the category. If, conversely, God acts on them, being substances, then He is not excluded from them, and the other mark of substantive existence fails, and *He* drops out of the category. And if all three be substances, then is no one before or after the rest, or entitled to the preeminent Divine name; and it is not less impossible for God than for matter to impart an idea to mind. This palpable inconsistency Descartes has no better method of evading than by a confessedly equivocal use of the word substance, dispensing with one of its two characters in the case of mind and

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matter; with the other in the case of God. They *exclude each other, but need Him;* He *needs only Himself, but is not excluded from them.* A distinction is thus drawn between infinite and finite, creative and created, substance; at the expense, however, of every advantage that could be hoped from resort to this logical notion. In the lower part of the scheme of deduction, its resources for explaining the genesis of things are fairly used; each of the two substances comes out in its attribute, and the attribute ramifies into the modes. But in the higher stage of the process there is no such relation, and an impassable chasm separates between God, as supreme term, and the two which are said to be derived from Him; if He is called substance in relation to them, they are not allowed to be attributes in reference to Him. His existence, therefore, in this character explains nothing respecting their origination; it is not from Him, *qud* Substance, but in some other and unexpounded capacity, that they proceed. In short, this theological apex of Descartes' doctrine is merely suspended over it in the air, and does not really repose on its foundations. God occupies merely an external relation, as a *tertium quid*, to mind and matter; which He produces, sustains, unites, not by any intelligible evolution from His nature, but by arbitrary miracle; by passing out of Himself to set up other existences beside Him. He is the physical creator of the universe, not its rational ground: He has put into man this or that idea as a deposit, and into matter this or that constitution, which might have been quite different; so that there is no deduction of things as they are from His essence, as there *is* of human knowledge and natural physics from the essence of mind as thinking and matter as extended. Causation, in the Cartesian system, takes, on its upper step, only a dynamical leap; but on its lower proceeds by way of notional development. If the appeal to God's power explains the *existence* of mind and matter, their *essence* is permitted to remain arbitrary and accidental; i.e. not elicited from His essence, but a detached fact, which has to be accepted, not deduced. This

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philosophy, therefore, had to be supplemented by faith; a feature which, however innocent and even necessary in itself, is justly chargeable as a fault in a writer who did not intend to omit anything from the scope of his system, but claimed for it an all-comprehensive character. This failure to realise its ambitious aim provoked into existence the larger doctrine of Spinoza.

§ 8. *Rejection of Final Causes.*

One feature of Descartes' philosophy I have yet to mention, which, though not peculiar to him, recommended him with special effect to the favour and disfavour of contemporaries and successors. He rejected the whole doctrine of *Final Causes*, and insisted that in studying the dependence of things we can never reason, in the order of thought, from the end to the means, but always in the order of production, from the means to the end; keeping strictly to the track of *efficient causation*. 'We shall not stop,' he says, 'to examine the ends which God has proposed to Himself in creating the world, and shall entirely reject from our philosophy the search for final causes; for we ought not to be so presumptuous as to believe that God has chosen to take us into His counsel; but, considering Him as the Author of all things, we shall apply ourselves only to make out, by the reasoning faculties which He has implanted in us, how the things which we perceive through the medium of our senses can have been produced; and we shall be certain, from those of His attributes of which He has willed us to have some knowledge, that whatever we have once perceived clearly and distinctly to belong to the nature of these things is secure of being true[1].' This proposition was a natural consequence of the author's application of purely mathematical and mechanical method to the study of nature, not only in its physics and astronomy, but even in its animal physiology. The properties of an ellipse are not put into it by design, but are

[1] Princ. Phil. P. I. 28, Tom. III. 81.

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elicited from its definitions; nor can the laws of matter be discovered by considering what they have to do and therefore ought to be, but only by noticing how it behaves in spite of varying conditions. And whoever forms his conception of *all* knowledge from the procedure of these primary sciences must necessarily repudiate all reference to the question, 'What is it for?' But the modern naturalist is well aware that, in tracing the relations and development of animal life, he cannot avoid the frequent enquiry, 'What is the advantage gained by this or that modification of structure or of instinct?'—a question with which no reader of Darwin's writings can fail to be familiar; and which is vindicated by authors so little theological as Schopenhauer and Hartmann.

§ 9. *Descartes' Controversies, Influence, and Death.*

Descartes' verdict on this point was eagerly seized upon for approval by scientific physicists in Holland, especially by Le Roy (Heinrich Regius), lecturer on medicine and physics in Utrecht, Ludwig Meyer (afterwards editor of Spinoza's posthumous works), and Balthasar Bekker, in Amsterdam. On the other hand, it sharpened the hostility of the theologians, to whose aversion vehement expression was given by Gisbert Voët, Rector of the University at Utrecht, and by Martin Schook, Professor at Groningen, in a series of controversial tracts, and particularly in a Discourse by the latter on occasion of his taking possession of his chair. The passionate advocacy of Le Roy, dividing the students of the University into turbulent factions, gave an advantage to the enemies of Descartes; and the teaching of his philosophy was proscribed by the Rector (1643). Though Descartes, on appealing to the magistrates, obtained redress for some of the calumnies circulated against him, and found a partial protection from the Prince of Orange and the States General, yet he was indicted as a public offender before the city court; and in 1645 the

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printing and sale of his works was prohibited. The reply which he made to his opponents, in his letter to the magistrates of the city of Utrecht against MM. Voët, father and son (probably June, 1645)[1], is able and vigorous enough, but in its tone and temper gives him no moral advantage over his enemies. While the Calvinists of Holland raised this storm around him, the Roman Catholics were divided in their feeling towards his philosophy. Under Jesuit influence the Curia at Rome put his writings under the ban in 1663, and the influence of the Sorbonne was directed against them; but, on the other hand, they were studied with favour at the Oratory, and especially treated with respect by Antoine Arnauld; so that Descartes' prudential deference towards the Church was not wholly without its reward. He was more happy in winning the admiration and regard of princely protectors really competent to appreciate the characteristics of his thought. His correspondence with the Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate shows that it was something more than a courtier's compliment when he said that, of all his friends, she best understood his philosophy. This accomplished lady was the eldest daughter of the King of Bohemia (Friedrich V. of the Palatinate), who lost his crown at the battle of Prague, and died in 1632 of the plague, at Mainz (the year of Spinoza's birth); and sister of the liberal-minded Carl Ludwig of the Palatinate, who opened his territory as an asylum for persecuted faiths, and offered Spinoza a professorship at Heidelberg; and niece of Charles I. of England, on whose death there is a letter of condolence to her from Descartes. Her mother's exile had settled the family at the Hague; and there Elizabeth, already a linguist, a mathematician, and not strange to philosophical literature, fell in, before she was twenty, with Descartes' first publication. It so laid hold of her, as to decide her devotion for life to philosophical studies. She declined all projects of marriage, and though never indifferent to the practical course of human affairs, reserved

[1] Tom. IX. p. 250.

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her independence chiefly with a view to intellectual pursuits. It was his friendship for her that chiefly determined Descartes to take up his residence near Leyden. His *Principia Philosophiæ* are dedicated to her; and his correspondence with her, commenced in 1643, ended only with his death. On its ethical side it has a durable interest. Less fortunate was his relation with another royal disciple, Christina, Queen of Sweden, the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus. With strange reaction from her father's faith, she conformed to the Roman Catholic Church; and, taking Descartes' professions of ecclesiastical allegiance *au sérieux*, she felt safe in indulging her desire to become his pupil, and earnestly pressed him, with liberal offers, to take up his abode at Stockholm. He complied with her request, and removed thither in the autumn of 1649; and for a few months was daily at the palace at 5 A.M. in attendance upon the queen's leisure hours. But the life was uncongenial to him: the language was strange to him; the food was unpalatable; the early morning hours intolerable; the houses uncomfortable; the climate blighting; and his own position that of an exile. His strength and spirits gave way, and he died of fever on February 11, 1650, at the age of 53, receiving the sacramental *viaticum* in his last hours at the hands of the priest. His remains, after sixteen years' repose in Sweden, were sent to France, and re-interred at St. Geneviève du Mont.

§ 10. '*Occasional Causes*' *of Geulinx.*

I shall not attempt to follow the philosophy of Descartes along the several lines of direction which it took after his death. Ere long it raised up metaphysical thinkers sufficiently strong to own their obligation to it, yet win an independent position; and they cannot be passed by without a special study. A minor effort to remedy the most obvious weakness of the system, admits of brief explanation, and forms a natural link between Descartes himself and the greatest of his successors.

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We have seen what embarrassments arose from recognising Extension and Thinking as alike substantive, whilst yet making them both dependent upon a higher, God, also treated as substance. The only way of escape from this embarrassment is boldly to strip mind and matter of their ***substantive*** pretensions, and, after reducing them to phenomenal being, to carry the idea of substance up to the supreme term (God), and fix it there as its exclusive seat. To do this, however, was to complete the weakest part of the scheme at the expense of the strongest; to win it for monism by relentlessly sacrificing that fundamental dualism, of self and the outer world, in which the system arose, and for which it subsisted. This was too heavy a price for the first disciples of the school to pay for consistency; and less thorough attempts to remedy the imperfection were made, before the keen edge of Spinoza's logic cut away the solid mass of the doctrine and preserved only the securer parts of its nexus for the weaving of another. The impassable chasm left between thinking being and extended being, forbidding either to operate on the other, left it unintelligible how objects could appear to give us perceptions, and we in turn could seem to act on objects. It was to solve this mystery that Geulinx (Professor of Philosophy at Leyden, 1646–1669) devised his doctrine of '*Occasional Causes*,'—a doctrine which so manœuvred the three substances, without relinquishing any of them, as to explain the correspondence of mental and material phenomena, yet save (it was supposed) their independence. No influence ever passed between body and soul; but, on occasion of a corporeal change, God put an idea of it into our mind; and on occasion of a volition on our part, God moved the limb and did the act for us. The body and the mind thus coexist, but pursue their separate courses without any causal connection. With the succession of volitions in the one correspond, term for term, the successive motions of the limbs in the other; but only as the beats of two clocks may be made to keep time together, though really

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independent of each other. Causation in this view distributes itself among the three substances in the following manner: (1) Mind can act on itself, and, within its own enclosure, bring forward thought on thought, and will on will, but can *know* nothing, and *do* nothing, in relation to the sphere beyond itself; (2) Body can act on body, and turn up phenomenon after phenomenon of the material world; (3) God interpolates all the mental phenomena of which outward and corporeal things are the objects, and all the material phenomena which answer to mental antecedents. The hypothesis, no doubt, fills up the whole series of facts, and supplies an exhaustive explanation. But it still introduces the first and Divine substance as operating on or within both the secondary ones; which is just as difficult to conceive, just as little reconcilable with the nature of substance, as the agency of the secondaries on each other. Geulinx himself was perfectly aware that his doctrine crossed the proper boundary of philosophy, and passed into the supernatural; for he declares that, did the earth itself tremble when the *word* 'earth' was pronounced, the miracle would be no greater than the actual movement of the speaker's tongue in uttering it. This escape into miracle, it is needless to say, is no explanation, but simply a despair of explanation. And the chief service rendered by the scheme of Occasional Causes is, that it brings very distinctly into view the logical infirmities of the Cartesian School.

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CHAPTER II.

MALEBRANCHE.

To make room for the coexistence of finite and infinite causality has ever been the *crux philosophorum;* for no sooner is the infinite invoked than the finite flies. This is just what happens in the transition from Geulinx to Malebranche. The former seemed to have reduced our power low enough, when he said that, in all our voluntary movements, and in all outward perceptions, we are mere spectators of phenomena without agency of our own. But he charged upon us no other inability than of the mind to act upon the body, and the body on the mind; still leaving to each the function of conducting its own history. This reservation is disallowed by Malebranche; in whose theory God becomes the sole and universal cause, within as well as between the two spheres of mind and matter. In him therefore philosophy goes over from the hesitating position in which Descartes had placed it into complete supernaturalism; as, in Spinoza, it passes into complete naturalism. The contrast between them is interesting, as showing the divergent directions which the inevitable struggle for consistency may take, when a system deficient in coherence is seized on and worked out by minds of opposite tendency. Had Spinoza really been influenced by the mystical turn of thought which is ascribed to him, and which at first sight his language sometimes appears to favour, he would have found his task already accomplished by his French contemporary; and his Ethics would have repeated, instead of superseding, the *Recherche de la Vérité.* But the speculative genius which was common to both men served a different need in each of them; in Malebranche, to give base and

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persuasiveness to Religion; in Spinoza, to give unity and universality to Science; in the one, to exhibit the universe as divine; in the other to prove it 'geometrical;' starting, in each case, with premisses taken from Descartes. This different interest, animating their philosophy, is conspicuous, not less in their life than in their writings.

§ 1. *Life and Personality.*

Malebranche, son of a royal secretary in Paris, was born in 1638 (six years after Spinoza), the youngest of a family of ten; and being weakly and sensitive from a malformation of the spine, was brought up at home till old enough to go to college, first for the study of philosophy at the *Collége de la Marche*, and then, at the age of twenty-two, for the theological course of the Sorbonne. So far he was carried without giving indication of any superior gift: the drill of ordinary education found and left him languid; and neither the logic of the schools, nor the Church history and technical theology of his ecclesiastical teachers, laid any hold upon him or touched any inward spring of power. Yet in Richard Simon he had no common master in Hebrew and Biblical criticism. As if conscious of a function for which he must still wait, he declined a canonry in Notre Dame, and, for purposes of further study, joined the congregation of the Oratorians. During a walk in the city, he took up at a book-shop Descartes' posthumous treatise *De Homine* and looked into it: it rivetted him, and struck right home to the needs of his genius: as he read it, he was thrown into such palpitations of delight that he had to pause for recovery. It was his moment of 'conversion,' which waked up his sleeping gifts and determined his career: he thenceforth devoted himself to the systematic study of the human mind, in its relation to the body, to external bodies, and to God, guided by the light of Descartes' leading principles. After ten years' uninterrupted labour upon these themes, he gave the results to the world in the first volume of his chief work, the

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Recherche de la Vérité, containing the first three of its six books, on the sources of error in the Senses, the Imagination, and the Understanding; the second volume following in the next year (1675), treating of the Inclinations, the Passions, and the method of attaining Truth. The book immediately called forth the liveliest enthusiasm and antipathy, and passed in twenty years through six editions, constantly amended and enlarged by supplement and explanations, till it received its final form in the Latin translation of the Abbé L'Enfant in 1684. The attack from the philosophical side was delivered against the first volume by an ecclesiastic, the Abbé Simon Foucher, an ultra-Cartesian, who founded his criticism on the sceptical principles of the Middle Academy: he was promptly answered in the Preface to the second volume. Far more numerous were the theological objections, not only from the Jesuits, but from the Jansenists; Régis (Pierre Sylvain) assailed the transcendental turn given to the Cartesian doctrine of ideas, which he had himself modified in the opposite or empirical direction; and Quesnel (Pasquier), controverting Malebranche's doctrine of *Grace*, referred the dispute to the arbitration of the aged Antoine Arnauld, and drew from him the condemnation which he desired. Malebranche's reply, *Traité de la Nature et de la Grâce*, first sharply criticised in 1683 by Arnauld's *Traité des vraies et des fausses Idées*, led to a series of polemical tracts which will be found in the collected works of both authors. In these writings, as well as in his *Méditations Chrétiennes et Métaphysiques* (1683), and his *Entretiens sur la Métaphysique et sur la Religion*, Malebranche's favourite appeal, notwithstanding his deference to the Church as the interpreter of revelation, is to Reason, as the final ground on which religion itself reposes. Among the adversaries that were scared by his originality was the formidable Bossuet himself; who recorded his opinion of the treatise on Nature and Grace by writing in his copy the words 'Pulchra, nova, falsa,' and who tried in vain to provoke him to an oral discussion of his characteristic doctrine; and, on Malebranche's

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resolute refusal to commit himself to an unwritten statement, is believed to have consigned to Arnauld the literary duel which was hardly suitable to his own dignity. He won back, however, the good-will of Bossuet in a later controversy (1697) with a Benedictine father, François Lamy, who, in a Treatise on the *Connaissance de soi-même*, had attributed to him the Quietist doctrine that love to God must be absolutely disinterested. Malebranche would not accept responsibility for an opinion already condemned in Rome as an enthusiasm; and explained himself in a treatise *De l'amour du Dieu*, which completely satisfied the Bishop of Meaux, but was accused by Lamy of inconsistency with the 'Enquiry after Truth.' The explanation consisted essentially in identifying the 'possession of God' with the joy attached to it, instead of separating them as means and end: the union with Him is indeed the supreme pleasure, and in desiring it, we desire the pleasure; but only as an inseparable element and nurture of Love to Him, and not as a private interest to which He is made subservient. His last controversy was occasioned by a work of Boursier's (Laurent-François) on the 'action of God upon created objects,' the purpose of which seems to have been to defend the idea, favoured by the followers of Aquinas, of the *preordination* of all physical movements, as against the new doctrine of God's immediate and living agency in the causation of every change. Malebranche replied in an essay entitled *Réflexions sur la prémotion Physique* (1715). Few of these metaphysical writings give any adequate idea of his attainments in mathematical and physical science: he reserved for the Academy of Sciences, of which he was elected a member in 1699, his essays on subjects of this kind; but in one of these (on the communication of motion) he criticises and corrects a Cartesian physical doctrine which he had advanced in his 'Enquiry into Truth,' viz. that the quantity of motion in nature is invariable.

Malebranche's incessant intellectual activity was sustained against the frequent oppression of infirm health. Like

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Berkeley, he had his favourite remedy for all maladies: his *elixir vitæ* was more accessible even than tar-water, for it was water pure and simple; of which he took profuse draughts, refusing everything else, whenever his ailments returned upon him. If the story be true which is told of Berkeley,—that he visited Malebranche in Paris in 1715,—the two philosophers may have compared notes about their respective panaceas; but if so, the event gave a deplorable victory to Berkeley; for, as the tradition goes, their discussion, in spite of hydropathy, was fatal to Malebranche; inducing an inflammation of the lungs, which carried him off, Oct. 15th of that year. It is, however, very doubtful whether the two idealists ever met. Neither of them has recorded any interview with the other; and though Berkeley, two years before this time, had a letter of introduction to Malebranche, no evidence exists of its having ever been presented. Had they met, however great might have been their moral sympathy, based upon common virtues, no philosophical approximation could well have resulted from their intercourse; for though both might agree to resolve the changes of the physical world into the action of God, their conceptions were irreconcilably different of the relation between finite spirits and the infinite.

The life of Malebranche was essentially that of a thinker, not of an actor, or even of a scholar. A despiser of mere learning, without historical curiosity, impatient of critical studies, careless of politics and social affairs, he communed with himself, with nature, and with God; and was never tired of sounding the speculative depths to which the problems regarding them descended. For quiet meditation on them he frequently retired to the country, alternating his walks in the woods with seclusion in a room shaded by drawn blinds. Not that he was an austere recluse; for he was always accessible and affectionate to his many friends, and, when he could unbend, enjoyed nothing so much as to talk and play with children. His ecclesiastical training had done nothing to spoil his pure and open love of truth; and

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his habitual piety imparted at once an elevation and a winning modesty to his character which made him universally beloved. Few philosophical writers present their thoughts in so lucid and attractive a style. His great work, says Fontenelle, 'left the impression of originality by the author's great art of setting abstract ideas in the clearest light, of connecting them together, of skilfully mingling with them a number of matters less abstract, which, being entirely understood, encouraged the reader to attack the rest, and flattered him with the hope of understanding them. Besides, the diction is pure and chaste; it has all the dignity which the subject requires, and all the grace of which it admits.' In this eulogy there is, perhaps, a little French exaggeration; at least, the modern reader, accustomed to a more rigorous treatment of philosophical problems, will, perhaps, be less affected than Fontenelle by the diffuse elegance of Malebranche, and would at times gladly exchange it for a more compressed and severe exposition of his reasoning. His minor controversial writings partake more of the vivacity and point which are said to have given a charm to his conversation; sometimes at the expense of the courtesy due to worthy opponents: and yet, if they are tried by the contemporary standard of polemical manners, they bear comparison with the best examples of temper and fairness. So much for the man; now for his system of thought.

§ 2. *Illusions through the Senses and Imagination.*

An enquiry into the Pursuit of Truth is an enquiry into the avoidance of error; for error, the great source of human misery, is but a missing of the truth; and the sources of it must be as numerous as our possibilities of knowledge. In other words, each of our capacities for knowing is a liability to ignorance, and must be examined in its turn, in order to our protection from mistake. The enquiry, therefore, will arrange itself into a review, one after another, of the several faculties of our nature.

As matter is a substance having Extension for its essence,

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so is the human mind a simple substance having Thought for its essence. And of these two each has a pair of capabilities whereby a certain correspondency is established between them. Matter is capable of assuming this or that *figure*, and this or that *motion*; Mind, of *understanding*, and of *willing*. The liability of matter to be shaped, and the liability of the mind to have perceptions and ideas, are pure passivities, the states in question being *given* to the respective subjects. Again, all motion in matter, however commenced, tends to take and keep a rectilinear direction; and similarly, all varieties of moving impulse in the mind are towards *Good*, or *God* as the absolute good, each being drawn to some particular aspect of this totality. Though the Author of Nature is the universal cause, alike of material movement and of mental inclination, there is this difference between the two cases; that matter cannot, without external interruption, arrest or change its advance in a right line; whereas the Will has an inherent power of variously determining, towards this or that, the indeterminate impression or inclination towards good-in-general which it receives from God. This power of specialising the good, which, in its universality, is the object of the Will, is *Liberty*. It is not a 'Liberty of indifference,' to will or not to will: will we must; it is the very movement impressed upon our nature, which we can no more stay than the falling stone can stand still in the air; but we can bend it towards any preconceived type of good other than that which preoccupies it now. All that is needful for the exercise of this power is, that the mind be furnished with this preconception; to choose a particular good, we must know it. Understanding, therefore, or the possession of ideas, must come before selection and action: understanding never judges, or passes beyond the reception of mental materials. It is the Will that really judges and decides on what is presented to it by the Understanding; and it may be variously betrayed into error by the matter that is thus offered to its determining power[1].

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, I. 1.

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The cognitive faculties which supply all the objects to our will are the Senses, the Imagination, and the Understanding. Through the senses, *external objects act* upon the brain, occasioning an immediate sensation, and leaving a durable vestige there. In the sensations themselves there is nothing misleading or hurtful; and if we are deceived through their means, we are self-deceived; the fault is with the will, which, abusing its liberty, draws hasty inferences from imperfect data. The several classes of illusion, especially visual, are expounded by our author, involving misjudgments of the distance, size, form, and motion or rest of objects. All these it is possible to escape, by scrupulous analysis of our experience. But for want of this, four perfectly distinct factors in the sensible phenomenon are habitually confounded together; viz. (1) what happens in the object affecting us (say, a burning log), e. g. the agitation of particles throwing heat-vibrations upon our hands; (2) what happens in our own organs of sense, e. g. the molecular undulations of the special nerves up to the brain; (3) the sensation, a phenomenon of the mind; (4) the mental judgment, that what we feel is in our own hand and in the burning object. It is the union in us of body and mind that occasions our confusion of these separate things together: so far it is natural; but it admits of correction by the application of reasonable attention. By far the most considerable error, however, is found in the prevalent belief that the senses give us a knowledge of an object as it is in itself; whereas they tell nothing except of its relation to our body. Only within these limits are their reports offered to us and admissible by us [1].

In the phenomena of *Imagination* there is no external object to initiate the organic movement; but, in place of it, the 'animal spirits' spontaneously institute the same agitation of the nerves, and through these the same impression on the brain, and the same image in the mind. We are aware in this case that it is not external; but, coexisting

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, I. 6–13. 20.

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with the pictures given by outward objects, blending with them and sometimes resembling them, it becomes the source of many illusions; as when men read a human face on the moon's disc, and see horses and battles in the clouds; or, if devoted to the study of some one object, find that object everywhere; like Gilbert, who, after long engagement with magnetic phenomena, ascribed to the magnet all sorts of natural changes which were due to other causes. To this kind of mistake studious persons are exceptionally liable; since it is easier to read than to think, they surrender themselves to a favourite author or an ancient authority, and prefer a finished picture presented by another to the laborious construction of a new one for themselves; or, if once an author has invented some new system into which he frames his world, he has no place left for disturbing facts, and becomes a captive in his own prison. Others, again, reading with critical intelligence rather than with any depth of judgment, discern only the flaws and failures in the books which pass through their hands; and draw the conclusion that certainty is nowhere to be found, and that all supposed knowledge is but insecure conjecture. The stronger the imagination, i. e. the more susceptible the brain of deep impressions from the action of the nerve undulations, the more subject will the mind be to the tyranny of these illusions [1].

§ 3. *Doctrine of Ideas.*

In proceeding to the Understanding, as a possible occasion for error, Malebranche apologises for the more abstract treatment imposed upon him by the nature of the subject. For here he takes leave of the phenomena due to the presence of the bodily organism, and is concerned with the intellect pure and simple; by which he means the faculty we have of knowing external objects without forming any image of them in the brain to serve as their representative: i.e. the power *of thinking of* them. This power

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, II. i. 1, 2. 5, 6; ii. 2. 4–8; iii. 1.

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is relative, and has to be considered in itself as *subjective* to us; and in respect of the *object* of our thought.

In the former aspect, it is simply the mind itself, and not any modification of it, like sensation, imagination, will; for thinking is the very essence of mind, as extension is of matter; there might be matter without motion; there might be mind without will; but if you take away thought, mind is no longer there; it thinks, and thinks always, even in sleep or swoon; but as this takes place in it as spiritual, it leaves no trace upon the brain, and therefore is not in the custody of memory, and is lost to our waking consciousness. All modes of mind are susceptible of degree; we may feel more, and imagine more, at one time than at another; but for the mind to *think more* now than then is as little possible as for matter to be more extended at one hour than at another[1]. Here we recognise the Cartesian doctrine against which was written the chapter of Locke's essay, entitled 'Men think not always.'

Next comes the question, what is the *object* of our apprehension when we have cognisance of anything outside of us. When we perceive the sun, does the mind quit the body and run along the radius vector to get within familiar proximity to him? It is not likely. Rather is the immediate object of the mind something which is in intimate union with our soul, entering it along with the visual image but not identical with it, viz. the *Idea* of the sun. The difference between images or representations and ideas is the difference between knower and known: a perception of sense, a representation of the imagination, is a modification of the mind itself; an idea is the object of the mind in its cognitive act, presupposed in its perception, and the true cause of that mental modification. You cannot have a representation of an object unless you have an idea of what is represented; but it does not follow that there is anything external *resembling* this idea; for we may have ideas of things which do not externally exist. It is indispensable to conceive of a

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, III. 1, 2, init.; VI. i. v. init.

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relation between sensible objects and their ideas in an order inverse to that which is usually given; i.e. the ideas are not taken *from an object* as their samples; but are themselves the models which created things imperfectly express, and which have a real, immutable, and eternal existence, not even depending on God's will or causality, inasmuch as they are uncaused and necessary[1].

There are five ways conceivable by which we may be put in possession of our knowledge of objects. (1) The ideas we have of them may come from the objects themselves. This supposition is excluded by the following considerations among others; that whatever comes from the body must be corporeal and therefore impenetrable; so that if representative ideas, or similars, are for ever flowing off from all things in heaven and earth to all persons, they must be very much in each other's way, and arrive considerably out of shape from collisions. And it is inexplicable how images of solid objects,—say the different sides of a cube,—can be sent out all of the same size and form, and arrive in perspective, variously reduced and contorted. (2) The mind may itself produce the ideas by its intrinsic power. This is an arrogant conceit: ideas are of a spiritual nature, with more and higher reality than material things; and to claim for ourselves the power to create them is to credit ourselves with work superior to that of the Author of nature. The error arises from the common habit of treating concomitant or immediately consecutive phenomena as cause and effect, the real cause being latent; as when the impact of one ball is taken for the cause of movement in another. So, when by an impulse of attention we call up ideas of which we are in want, we set them down to our own account, and treat our will as their cause; instead of being content to say that, in the order of nature, this is the usual connection in which they are given us. (3) Ideas of objects may be implanted in us by God, either innately or *pro re natâ*. This is highly

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, III. ii. 1, Illustr. ad. II. sup. Nat. idearum. Réponse à Régis, II. 12. 14. 23.

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improbable. For, as the objects of which we need ideas are infinite in number and heterogeneity, God would have to create and store up in every mind an entire universe of ideas; from which, in some incomprehensible way, the mind would have to select and turn out the particular ideas wanted from moment to moment. Or, if this dealing out of ideas by exigency is assigned to God, it renders Him subservient to our caprice, placing His creative power at the disposal of human nonsense and folly. (4) The mind may be supposed, by its mere introspection, to gain all ideas of outward things in contemplating itself and its own perfection; so that it needs nothing but its own nature in order to read the world. This hypothesis, however, claims for ourselves what can be affirmed only of God. In Him indeed, i.e. in His ideas, the universe is preformed, and all that is or can be exists in thought, while yet it is not; so that He sees created objects in Himself. This is the attribute of the Infinite being. But how can a finite mind thus contain all beings within itself, and by its own reflective light read the essence and the existence of everything else[1]?

The rejection of these four doctrines brings Malebranche to the characteristic principle of his philosophy, viz. that we see all things in God. *The possibility* of this is evident from two considerations; that in God there must be ideas of all things created, for else He could not have created them; and that God is in intimate omnipresence with our minds. Hence our minds are in contact with the very seat of all ideas. *God is the place of all spirits, as space is the place of all bodies.* This being so, can we doubt how the *fact* really stands? God has but to leave this infinite store open to our minds, i.e. to let us have ideal capacity for it (without which what could 'mind' be?), and the problem of our knowledge solves itself in the simplest way, without any apparatus of an infinitude of ideas separately created for each individual finite mind. Moreover, the process of thought in fixing our attention on a particular object is

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, III. ii. 1–5.

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always a descent from the general to concentration upon the special; nor can we predicate about an individual without referring it to a species, or about a species without including it in a genus; so that the mind is ever furnished with a higher term, and in the last resort sees all beings comprised in One, i.e. all ideas in God. Further, it has the idea of the *Infinite*, which cannot proceed from finite resources; and, what is more, has it earlier than the idea of the finite; inasmuch as the finite can be thought only as a limitation within the infinite. The very ground, therefore, of our thinking is no other than the one boundless and universal Being; and its process is a communion with His ideas. We, like all else, are made for Him as our supreme end; and he is the real object of all our knowledge and all our love[1].

The startling nature of this doctrine occasioned so many objections, that Malebranche made it the subject of more special treatment in his Appendix of illustrations. Taking it as universally admitted that man is a rational being, capable of knowing what is true, he insists that the Reason, which is common to us all, and which makes us certain, not only that twice two are four, but that this relation holds for a Chinaman, an Egyptian now a mummy, or a man in the moon, cannot be the property of any individuality, but must be universal, the ground not of this or that created mind, but of Mind in general, prior to all differences of personality. It is therefore as partakers, in our imperfect way, of an intellectual essence infinite and everlasting, that we apprehend certain immutable and necessary truths, not only mathematical but also moral; e.g. that a man must care for his coachman more than for his horse, for his friend more than for a dog; and that minds are superior to bodies. These relations belong to an eternal order independent of all legislative will, and are conformed to as unalterable even by God Himself; not that they are external or prior to Him (for *that* nothing can be, and He has only Himself to

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, III. ii. 6.

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consult); but they are coeternal and consubstantial; identical with His wisdom, by communication of which we are admitted to them. This doctrine, however, must be guarded against two errors which lie upon its borders. The ideas which we read in God are intellections of the pure reason only, not the perceptions of sense or imagination which often clothe and contain them: the former alone give us the essences of things whence their properties are necessarily deducible; the latter would not be there at all, if the mind were alone, but are due to its union with the body: the former are clear and luminous; the latter confused and obscure. Again, we are not to suppose that, because we see things in God, we see *His Essence*, i.e. Himself. What we apprehend intellectually, i.e. in ideas, is the essence of created things, in a successive and limited way,—now this, now that, as these essences exist in Him. But this is not to see His essence, the containing infinitude and universality; just as to see objects reflected in a mirror, does not involve seeing the mirror itself. We apprehend only particular beings, in their finite essence; but God is *all* being, and although One, not one out of a number[1].

The place which the doctrine of ideas occupies in Malebranche's philosophy will be more distinctly seen, if we examine his classification of the different modes of 'seeing,' i.e. of knowing. Of these there are four: viz. (1) *objectively immediate*, when that which is known penetrates or mingles with our mind: (2) by *mediate representation*, i.e. through ideas, which are other than the things known; (3) *subjectively immediate*, when the knower and the known are the same, and the knowledge is mere self-consciousness; (4) *mediate by analogical inference*, or 'conjecture,' when we suppose an unknown thing to be present from marks of similarity to what is known. The principle of this classification will be found to lie in the assumed parallelism and mutual exclusion of body and spirit. To mind there can be

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, Illustr. ad II. sup. Nat. idearum. Object. et Resp. p. 86.

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nothing immediate but mind; nor is immediate interaction possible to finite minds, so far as we have experience; their finiteness being constituted by their being lodged in a bodily organism, and so kept apart from acquaintance except through signs. But each mind is present to itself, and can have thought direct from thought; and God is present to all minds, and can pervade them with the knowledge of Himself. On the other hand, between outside bodies and the mind an impenetrable darkness spreads; and unless they can find representatives in the ideal world, they can never be known. Proceeding upon this principle, Malebranche decides upon the range of his four categories as follows.

(1) God only is known as immediate object; and though it is conceivable that other spiritual natures might be put into direct communion with each other and with ours, in point of fact it is not so in this life; and He alone can illuminate the mind by His own substance or very being. To know an infinite being otherwise than directly is impossible; for what can there be to represent Him? All other existences, being special, are *ipso facto* disqualified for representing the universal; and, as finite, are within the infinite, and are the negation of its meaning. God is self-revealed.

(2) Of the contents of the universe, viz. bodies with their properties and spirits with their properties, the former are known through their ideas; i.e. through their intelligible essence which was in the mind of their Creator while yet they were not, and is in our mind so far as we understand them. Thus, the idea of Extension is that whence the properties of figure and motion and all that follows thence are deduced, and a system of thought constructed corresponding to the relations of physical nature. To have this idea is to see the essence of matter as it is in God; and so far we know it as He knows it; and were our mind infinite the two knowledges would coalesce; but through the defect of our intelligence, the properties we miss are in boundless

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excess of those which we apprehend. Still, what we do see, we see in Him.

(3) Our own mind we know by what is called the 'Inner Sense' or *consciousness:* and, therefore, only so far as our consciousness goes; i.e. the particular phenomena which we have experienced from time to time, such as sensations of colour, feelings of anger, desire of rest, &c. But these scattered changes that turn up teach us nothing of the essence of our mind; nor is there any one of them from which we could tell our capacity for another: from the consciousness of vision, for example, we should never guess the pleasure of music or the pangs of remorse. This knowledge therefore is altogether imperfect, and stops at the past gains without being fruitful of more; it is not a knowledge through ideas: God knows the essence of our mind, but we only know its variations as they pass. Of the existence of our mind, however, and of its natural superiority to the body, we are absolutely assured by the self-consciousness.

(4) The minds of others are inaccessible to us by any of these methods; and are known only by their inferred likeness to our own. Their *existence* is indicated by the appearance in other human bodies of actions and gestures exactly like those which in ourselves are the natural language of mental states. Their *similitude* to our own mind is inferred with more or less certainty according to the parts of the two inner experiences that are compared, i.e. whether or not they involve the bodily organisms, in which there is room for difference. Our assurance that twice two are four, that it is better to be righteous than to be rich, that pain and evil are to be avoided, is absolute, and a matter of pure intellection; and wherever mind is at all, these positions must hold good as unconditionally true. In knowing them, we know the universal mind of God, and therefore that of all particular spirits. But when I feel hot or faint, when I see this or that form or colour, I cannot so certainly judge my neighbour's experience by my own; these sensible

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affections depend upon the union of the mind which is homogeneous, with bodies which are separate and more or less heterogeneous; and may not therefore duplicate themselves in the two [1].

§ 4. *The Will: its 'Inclinations' and 'Affections.'*

In passing from the cognitive to the active part of our nature, Malebranche unfolds the analogy between motion in the material and will in the mental world. If God had left matter to its own essence alone, without adding to it any motion (which does not belong to its essence), there would have been no difference among bodies; all would have been a uniform spread of infinite dimensions, expressing the immensity and power of its Author; but without the variety which makes the beauty of things, or the succession which makes their history; which together fill created minds with admiration of the Divine wisdom. Motion is the source of all physical differentiation.

Had minds been left without natural inclinations (all of which are summed up in the word Will), they would similarly have been undistinguishable from each other. It is the variety of mental impulses which gives all the play of character, and the lights and shades on the moral scenery of life; just as it is material movements that mould a chaos into a cosmos, and that give to view not the bare sublimity of God, but His justice, His compassion, His goodness [2]. In this new and dynamical realm, Malebranche distinguishes two orders of impulses: (1) those which belong to minds, as such, and which would still be operative in them though they were pure spirit apart from any organism; (2) those which are conditional on their union with a sensitive body, and which agitate the mind through disturbances of the blood and the animal spirits. This distinction is the same in its basis with that which, in the cognitive part of our nature, separates the pure understanding from the senses

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, III. ii. 7. [2] Ibid. IV. 1.

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and the imagination, rendering the former the source of clear ideas, the latter of confused. Malebranche admits that the purely spiritual will is presupposed in all the physical tendencies, and is the generic type of all our energy; so that the difference is between this type pure and simple, and the same working under conditions of corporeal association. The impulses under the former head he calls 'inclinations' or 'natural movements of the mind;' those under the latter, 'affections' or 'passions;' conceiving of the first mainly as energies from within: of the second, as what we *receive or undergo* from without, i.e. from our organism; though this again is subject to the qualification, that the 'inclinations,' though prime movers relatively to the rest of our nature, are impressed on it by God, and so far are data from another spirit, as the passions are what we suffer from our own body[1]. This distinction it is the more important to understand, because it plays a large part in the psychology of that age, reappears in the writings of Spinoza, and gives to the words 'affections' and 'passion' a special meaning which with us they have long lost.

From the peculiar Theism of that age the idea was inseparable that the Creator was once alone; and that in that solitude He preconceived the scheme of created things, and in due time executed the work which He had thought out. Hence, when the question was raised, what induced this change from lonely existence to a peopled universe, the *end in view* could only be sought within the Infinite nature itself; other nature beyond, foreign field of contemplation, there was not; what He made, He made for satisfaction of His own Perfection; if He made it for love, the product of His love was but a function of Himself, a portion of a universe which is Himself externalised. In conformity with this mode of thinking, Malebranche lays it down 'that God cannot have any other principal end of His agency than Himself, though He may have many secondary ends, all

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 1.

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tending to the conservation of the beings He has created. He cannot have for His principal end anything different from Himself, because He cannot have a mistaken aim and set up His ultimate end in beings that do not comprise all good in themselves. But for a secondary end He may have the conservation of created beings; for since all beings are sharers of His goodness, they are necessarily good,—yes, "very good," as the Scriptures say. God therefore loves them; and indeed it is by His love that they are preserved; for all things subsist simply because God loves them[1].' Hence Malebranche concludes, that, as all things subsist only by His will, God's chief end is His own glory, but that, with a view to this end, He wills also the conservation of His creatures. Thus it is a consequence of identifying God with the All, i. e. of predicating of Him an infinitude which leaves nothing else, that in Him all other love is resolved into Self-love or made dependent upon it: it is for His own sake that He loves His creatures. Yet, when we change the scene to the field of human character, we are required to invert this order; we are to love others for the sake of God, and God for His own sake, and neither for the sake of ourselves; and, without this disinterestedness, the affection is but a moral pretence. A higher perfection is thus possible to man, and demanded for him, than is accessible to God; and we are brought to the paradox, that in obeying Him we morally transcend Him. This principle is the key to the mysterious dicta of the Pantheistic school, that both God's love to His creatures, and also man's love to Him, are identical with God's Self-love;—strange enigmas, taken in Spinoza for a sublime idealism, but really solved by a quasi-trick of algebraic substitution.

The will, that is, the natural inclinations of all minds, being simply the impulse imparted by God, is everywhere, in us no less than in angels, like His own; that is, directed on the same object, namely Himself, the sum of all good; and, if specialised upon subordinate objects, yet, like His,

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 1, 2.

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none the less *One* Love for being distributed on partial forms of good embraced within the whole and rendered good on that account. There is therefore no inclination of our mind that is not good and even Divine, nay, identical with the impulse of the most perfect natures; nor has the entrance of Sin done anything to alter this fundamental fact. All love is still of God, in the greatest sinner no less than in the saint: they do well to love; they cannot love badly; but they may love *bad things*, that is, the wrong things, out of the due order in which God bids them set their love; especially, resting in this or that created object which they like, as if it were the prime source instead of the mere occasion of their joy, and so allowing it to turn them away from God instead of drawing them to Him. To such abuse of their liberty men are tempted chiefly by the incidents of their corporeal life, i. e. by what the senses and imagination mingle with the pure intelligence. With the 'inclinations' which come from God, the dangerous competitors are the 'affections' or 'passions' which spring from the body; and whoever chooses to surrender himself to these, falls into oblivion of God, and loses himself by total misdirection of His Divine gift of love.

§ 5. *Errors in Pursuit of Good, Absolute, Personal, Social.*

Notwithstanding the Supreme Source of our natural inclinations, they become the occasion, under our misuse of them, of several distinctive errors; in the survey of which Malebranche refers them to three different heads: (1) those which are connected with our inclination to Good in general, the root of all our love; (2) those which belong to our principle of self-conservation and clinging to our happiness; (3) those occasioned by our inclination towards other created objects that are serviceable to ourselves or those we love. A few words are needed on each of these[1].

Of the first of these tendencies it must be said that, as it

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 1. 3.

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is our supreme prerogative, so is it our chief disquietude. It is an infinite capacity lodged in a finite mind, and agitating it with a yearning that cannot be satisfied, with a straining of the spiritual vision for what is beyond its horizon. Under its influence, the will, craving universal good, urges the intellect to find some object that represents it; but whatever is offered pleases but for an hour, and then is convicted of defect and flung aside, and the will cries out for something truer to its boundless wants. For ever borne away in love towards what is good and wonderful and has a semblance of infinitude, the mind, in the void of the common and familiar, oscillates between the spring of hope and the collapse of disappointment; and this unrest of will betrays us into various errors.

From preoccupation with its own possible good, the will enlists our intellect exclusively in pursuit of objects related to ourselves and carrying in them the illusory promise of personal happiness, the useful rather than the true; and even within these limits, engages its efforts only by fits, now upon this, then upon that, nothing finite being able either to content or to arrest the pursuit of a good that is infinite. Hence result a distaste for things in which we see no connection with ourselves, an incompetency for disinterested thought, and a consequent ignorance of matters related to us in the highest but in the least sensible way. Whatever subjects, for instance, involve abstract thought, are from this cause in the most backward state, harbouring still, after thousands of years, humiliating contradictions and paralogisms. Thus Ethics, ranging over the whole field of duty, and even of life eternal, and susceptible of systematic proof, attract but little notice from men, because resting on metaphysic principles which do not speak to the senses and imagination. And so, under cover of confused ideas, we have false Ethics made to suit men's convenience and pleasure; just as, were men's conception equally confused of the proposition that similar triangles have their sides proportional, and did their interests require that the sides should

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not be proportional, we should have a false geometry to humour their passions; the truth all the while coming in their way as if it were their enemy. 'The restless will of men incessantly turns their intellectual vision upon sensible objects, which please by their variety; for it is the multiplicity and variety of them which prevents the recognition of their vanity, and keeps men in perpetual hope of finding in them the true good of which they are in quest.' Of this another example is found in the stupid acquiescence of men in doubt about so stupendous a question as their own immortality;—a question by no means difficult to determine, only having its decisive evidence, not in sensible experience, but in abstract principles and rigorous reasoning, and therefore giving too much trouble to minds accustomed to flit from one sensational object to another, and incapacitated for steady and strenuous thought. 'No doubt, attention and accurate examination of things costs some pains; but what good can be won without labour? for sagacious men and philosophers who concern themselves with the investigation and defence of truth, it is disgraceful to talk without understanding what they talk about, and idly to acquiesce in that which they in no wise comprehend[1].'

The same pressure of their nature towards a good beyond its grasp occasions also a tendency the very reverse of this acquiescent indifference, viz. an intense curiosity about whatever is new and out of the way; a tendency vastly superior to false and lazy security, and having a legitimate function for every progressive mind; yet, performing this function only under certain conditions, which Malebranche reduces to three laws: (1) that men are not to seek novelty in matters of Faith which are withdrawn from the cognisance of reason; (2) that novelty constitutes no ground for the acceptance of opinions as good and true; (3) when we have adequate reason for believing that certain truths are so recondite as to be to all intents and purposes undiscoverable, and productive of only slight and unsatisfactory advantage to us, we must

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 2.

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not yield to the attraction of their novelty and specious aspect. In commending the first of these rules, Malebranche shows himself a good ecclesiastic in his deference to Catholic authority and his contempt for heresy. In treating of the others, he reverts to the habitual good sense which characterises his writings quite as much as their better known mystical piety. He adduces Hobbes as an example, in his criticism of Euclid, of misapplied love of novelty; inasmuch as an inclination intended to operate for the attainment of truth, and to subside when the treasure is secured, is here morbidly bent on undoing what has been solidly done, and scattering in confusion the gains of the past. The passage is curious, as an evidence that Hobbes was well known in France, even to one who was no great reader [1].

The second of our natural inclinations, Self-love and the desire of self-conservation, has an origin nothing short of the highest; for it is but the human form of God's love for us as for all His creatures, and of that perpetual preservation of them without which they would cease to be. Since He loves us, our love is not misplaced in resting on the same objects. But then it must be only in due subordination to that which we give to worthier objects, and above all to the infinitely Good; and it is in the loss of this relative position, and in its various forms of setting up for itself, that it becomes the source of aberration and misery. Malebranche reviews it under two forms: the craving for a *large scale* of being; and the craving for *pleasurable being;* the one, intent upon outward quantity; the other, upon inward quality or tension [2]. The elements which increase the range of life are power, dignity, independence,—all of them unfit objects, except under severe restrictions, for a nature whose supreme relation is that of absolute dependence, and which forgets itself when trying to play the god. In this first form the aim at greatness is evidently relative; even in the field of knowledge and character, its ambition is to *excel others* in attainment and virtue; and with such emulative struggle towards

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 3, 4. [2] Ibid. IV. 5.

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the perfection of our nature there would be little fault to find, if that perfection were truly conceived, and its parts kept in their right proportion. But in quest of distinction we are apt to consult, not what is best in itself, but what men most admire; and since they are wonder-struck by the showy and the rare, rather than by the reasonable and true, we are tempted to throw our energy into perverse directions. The most essential knowledge is by no means that which wins applause, viz. of such metaphysic truths as underlie religious faith itself, and form the preconceptions of all the sciences, and the basis of our knowledge of man. The knowledge of Nature, and the mathematics as its indispensable instrument, stand in close relation with the life of God in the universe; yet are often treated with indifference or ignorant aversion by pious people who say that they are of no concern to a Christian, and by furious bigots who denounce as an atheist any man who explains the natural laws of the thunderstorm and its effects. This thought kindles in Malebranche an indignant memory of Voët's attack upon the writings and personal influence of Descartes; and in a vigorous digression he defends the reputation of his master against the feeble contumelies of the Dutch pastor. It must be admitted, however, that his pleading for even natural knowledge is far from being consistently broad: he approves of Anatomy, partly as a study of man, and partly as promising an abatement of human maladies; but *Astronomy* he regards as an utter waste of time: what, he asks, does it signify to us whether the zone round Saturn is a ring or a great cluster of planets? And all Philological erudition and scholarship, all the ponderous labour spent upon ancient literatures, religions, and history, all Rabbinical, Arabic, and Grecian learning, he disposes of as so much solemn trifling,—a mere 'Doctrina stultorum.' It all rests upon false worship of the exceptional, irrespective of worth; and results in nothing but pride[1].

Nor is the pursuit of wealth and dignity less fatal to the

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 6, 7, 8.

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attainment of truth than devotion to false learning. The man ambitious of social or political eminence has neither time nor taste for serious enquiry into subjects involving deep reflection and remote from immediate interests. He is surrounded by admirers and partisans, who fill him with the idea that he knows all that is worth knowing, and habituate him to look down upon intellectual superiors of more modest station. And he is dependent on the suffrage of others who know and think even less than himself, and whose ignorant humours he must consult, if he is not to be disappointed of his aim. Enveloped in these influences, he lives and breathes in an atmosphere of illusion[1].

The second form of self-love, viz. the aim not at large being, but at *well being*, or happiness, leads Malebranche to defend against the Stoics the position that pleasure is good and pain is evil. The eloquent ingenuity of these philosophers may persuade you, when you read them at your ease, that you may be happy in the keenest sufferings, and wretched amid pleasurable excitements; but when the torture grasps you, nature will be too strong for their sophistries, and an irresistible inward consciousness will cry out that it is not well with you. God has created pleasure as a good, pain as an evil: He uses them expressly as such, the one as reward, the other as punishment: He constitutes all living natures to welcome the one and shun the other; and it is an idle paradox to ignore these indelible characters of good and ill.

Yet, though pleasure is always a good, it is not always right to seek, or even to accept it. It is instituted, and attached to the created objects which we enjoy, not to fix our affections on them, or on ourselves, as if either were its cause, but to draw us to Him who is its real and only cause: but, since Sin entered the world, it has bewitched men with sensible things and hindered their life in God; and so far as it catches us in this snare, it is to be shunned as an enemy. Moreover, its institution is, in this life, not for its own sake simply, but as a reward of conformity with God's will, and

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 9.

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as an encouragement to persist in that conformity: it is therefore in place, only when we *deserve it;* and, conscious as we must be, since the state of innocence was lost, of deserving nothing, or far less than the least which we receive, we should be ashamed to seek or to take what is not really ours. If we do so, we are taking a kind of mean advantage of God; and because He faithfully adheres to the order of nature, which He established for an innocent race, we snatch from Him the good prepared for guiltless souls, and put a violence upon His justice. It cannot be expected that this will remain unredressed: it is rendered possible now by the union of body and mind in the same nature; when death dissolves the union, the reckoning with the mind will be made straight. Of this moral disqualification for any large volume of pleasure a secret suspicion, if not a clear consciousness, lurks in us all; so that a shadow of uneasiness and anxiety steals over the plenitude of happiness; and in ome at least of our bitterest pains, as in those of contrition, there is a dawning light of peace. For these reasons those who do not yet identify all good with God, and habitually refer it to the invisible hand that dispenses it, will do well, while avowing that happiness is always in itself good, often to turn aside from it into a more thorny path [1].

The love of pleasure is followed by Malebranche from the ethical into the speculative field, and made responsible for the same misdirection of intellectual power, the same inaptitude for abstract thinking, the same feeble sense of the demonstrated existence of God, which he has already charged upon the first type of natural inclination. In support of his argument he enters into a defence, more acute than satisfactory, of Descartes' *à priori* proof of the existence of God: with the exception of this episode, he moves entirely on lines of thought which we have already traced [2].

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 10.

[2] Ibid. IV. 11. As usual, when he wants an example of human ignorance and slavery to sensible impressions, he cites in this chapter

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Finally, this quest of happiness is pursued beyond the confines of this life; still with the same view, to illustrate the errors and distresses into which its intensity betrays us. When aggrandised by the stupendous idea of eternity, it is apt to acquire an overwhelming power, far more upon its terrible side, the dread of anguish, than on the opposite, the hope of joy. This ascendency of religious fear is due to the secret consciousness of sin, an intimate and haunting reality which eclipses the mere faith in the infinite mercy. This disturbing fear becomes, especially with the sensitive and weak, the source of grievous ills. Some, unable to bear the incubus of terror, yet confess it a delusion by a suicide which else would instantly realise it. Others, credulous as the sick from self-incurred maladies, resort to the worthless nostrums of superstition, and impose on themselves an external discipline of Pharisaic servilities before God, which are simply deprecatory for themselves, and are anything but the spiritual worship of a contrite heart. There is yet a different class in whom this fear produces an obstinate resistance to all new ideas in which they cannot find the sacred formulas of the Scriptures and the Church; e.g. they cling to the ignorant belief that animals really feel pain; and that sensible qualities are seated in the objects which affect us; their salvation will be in peril, if they listen to the alleged evidence that the earth goes round the sun; and they never ask themselves the question whether Joshua was acquainted with the solar system; and whether, if he were, he would speak before his soldiers in terms of his own or of their astronomy? Such are the miserable effects of self-love, when it seizes and profanes the hopes and fears of religion.

The third natural inclination, viz. to fellowship with other created beings, especially of our own kind, is again a

the common belief that the brutes feel pain when they howl and crouch and whine under blows; men being too stupid to see that the abstract proof of automatism is most clear and certain, with nothing to set against it but a confused presumption from their own senses (p. 296).

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development and indeed a part, of God's love to all that He has made; and is therefore another feature of our similarity to Him, and of the organic unity of His creation. The sympathy which connects us with the whole scene to which we belong may be long latent, while we are immersed in relations immediately proximate; but betrays itself at once when any sudden appeal wakens us to remoter interests. Day by day we care little about the stars; but, when told of a comet or an eclipse, we are on the *qui vive* with curiosity. Amid our private affairs, we may seem to care little for the State of which we are citizens: but let a conflict break out with a neighbouring country, and in a moment the hidden affection starts up; in eagerness for the public news we can hardly transact our private business; the suspense of battle, the defeat, the victory, agitate us with anxiety, with dismay, with exultation. Nothing indeed is more marvellous than the natural co-ordination of mental needs and bodily movement, and the contagiousness of both among a multitude of men, constituting a very miracle of latent sympathy. A sudden cry of pain mechanically extorted from a sufferer strikes upon the ear of some who are not too far to render help; it startles their attention, be they of what nation or condition they may; for such a cry is meant to be, and is, vernacular to every rank and every tongue. It flutters the brain, and in a moment changes the whole attitude of those whom it pursues. In a trice it kindles in their minds a desire to succour the utterer of that natural prayer, which speaks to them in truth less as an intreaty than as a command[1]. In such closely woven texture do the ties unite us to each other and to God, which constitute the Divine organism of the world.

There is, moreover, a beneficent balance between our self-love and our social sympathy. If the former makes us ambitious of superiority over others, the latter reminds us that this superiority cannot be acceptable to those whom it

[1] Compressed from a fine paragraph, too long to quote, De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 13, p. 304.

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relatively depresses, and induces us to keep it in the background and soften the grievance by graciousness and willing sympathy; and when this proceeds, not from any assumed courtesy, but from the true prompting of a gentle heart, it smooths the inequalities of nature, and reconciles the social union with the real varieties and inevitable competitions of mankind. At the same time, even this unselfish propensity is not without its dangers and mistakes. In the narrower circles of intercourse, it gives an artificial weight to the opinions and dispositions of our friends; predisposing us to accept them idly and dispense with the rational tests which they require; or even to suppress incipient doubts of their correctness and uphold them without clear assurance of their truth. And in the wider relations of public life, sympathy with the mixed multitude may too easily tempt a superior man, even without ends of personal affection, to conceal and excuse their errors, to overpraise their good qualities, to make the most of their grievances and the least of their faults; and so, through an unregulated benevolence, to become rather their corrupter than their guide. These errors justify the frequent saying, that we have more to learn from our enemies than from our friends[1].

§ 6. *Nature, Process, and Errors of the 'Affections.'*

The affections or passions of the mind, not less than the natural inclinations, we have as impressions from the Author of nature; with this difference: that they induce love for our body and for whatever tends to preserve it; while the inclinations take us to the love of God as the supreme good. 'They are occasioned by a movement of the animal spirits into an adjustment suitable to the object perceived, and to the co-operation of body and mind with regard to it. The adjustment is instituted, in order to adapt the bodily movements for duly executing our volitions,

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, IV. 13.

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and to attach to the bodily movements, mechanically excited by the presence of an object, a mental affection which disposes our will towards what the body then wants. This is the perpetual impression of the Divine will in us, whereby we are closely united with a certain portion of given material; and were that impression of the Divine will to cease for an instant, we should be set free from the dependence in which we are held on all the changes in our body[1].' Through this dependence on an organism we are bound up in relations more or less close with a vast system of external beings, from the family and State to the earth and stars. It is in vain for the Stoic to tell a race thus constituted that they are kings of an independent realm, masters of all things, and subject to no vicissitude that need affect them: they know that the mind is superior to the body; yet liable, nevertheless, to suffer with it; nor can they pretend that the pain is no ill. Instead of proudly challenging and defying it, a Christian man would deem it more reasonable to avoid it, if he rightly can, and if not, to meet it worthily, when he must.

There are varieties of range and degree in this our dependence on external objects. It is limited by the area of our knowledge: the peasant has few ties beyond his village, while the statesman's interests may extend over half a world. Objects familiar only to the imagination are less to us than those which we have seen and remember. And the more we habitually discipline ourselves to withstand the importunity of the passions and live on the pure good possible to the mind, the slighter will be our thraldom to outward things. Besides these general rules of variation, special differences arise from age, sex, station, religion; and from predispositions occasioned by these influences we can often forecast the action of men almost as surely as the astronomer an eclipse; 'for though men are free, yet they seldom use their freedom against the vehement resistance of their natural inclinations and affections.'

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 1, p. 312.

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It might be supposed that, as the 'natural inclinations' are inherent in the pure mind, they would go through their history without any sensitive consciousness or cerebral change. But it is not so. In consequence of the present union of the mind with the body, these inclinations, directed upon spiritual things, e.g. love of truth, of justice, of God Himself, are attended by movements of the animal spirits which leave vestiges on the brain; and so pass into sensible affections more or less vivid. And even as an aid in remembering and thinking over abstract truths, such as the relations of quantity, we resort to a *record* which can be *imagined*, like the notation of arithmetic and algebra; and by these means are able to follow a texture of relations through intricacies which else we could not disentangle, to truths beyond our mere intellectual surmise. Thus, sensible affection or feeling spreads over everything human; nor is there anything conceivable of which we could assert that, in regard to it, all men are exempt from the sway of feeling[1].

Malebranche analyses the rise and operation of an affection or passion into seven stages, from the first presentation of the external object to the final fascination of the mind by it, and seizure of it by bodily action. This analysis, resting on the obsolete physiology of 'animal spirits,' it is needless to follow. Two features in it may, however, be specified as interesting in relation to later doctrines. (1) He lays it down, that, although the *sensation* of pain is no more the mere privation of pleasure than pleasure is the mere absence of pain, yet there is nothing *objectively* evil except what is relative to some good and the *negation of that good;* so that the natural movement of the mind by which it wards off evil is the same as that by which it is driven towards good, viz. the *love of good;* and there is no need to call in the hatred of evil as a separate passion. Here we have already the theory, afterwards important, of the purely negative character of evil. (2) In treating of the transformation of sensory excitement conducted to the brain into motory sent

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 2.

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into the limbs, Malebranche attributes two simultaneous effects to the same arriving stimulus, viz. a mental consciousness and a mechanical delivery of motion; 'the same cerebral agency stirs the mind and the animal spirits[1].' This is precisely the position assumed by the advocates of human automatism, unless they adopt the Leibnizian hypothesis of parallelism: they simply add, that the line of causation, after this divarication, continues on the mechanical track, and goes no further than this one step upon the mental.

The whole process of the 'affections' is instinctive and involuntary; and the sole concern of our will is to assent and yield, or to protest and withstand. There is nothing but confused impulse, nothing clear, nothing authoritative, in these promptings of the senses; we should have them if we had no minds; and they are subject to the dictates of reason, i.e. to the inward voice of God. Only so far as they stand comparison with this test can we assent to them without misuse of liberty. It is indeed plausibly contended by Epicurus that, as pleasure is admitted to be always either good or a sign of good, men cannot go astray in surrendering themselves to the desires of their hearts; nor is the Stoic denial of this principle rationally tenable. But the true answer is simple. The good to which sensible pleasure is a real and correct index is the good of the body; and if this were all our store, there would be no fault to find with the hedonistic doctrine. But we have also minds, whereby we are united immediately to God; in Him is our supreme good; and Him, as the spirit of our spirits, we are to love, not blindly with instinctive drift, but freely, and with clear inward eye of choice, and conscious reciprocity of thought. To this end of our nature, no antecedent sensible pleasure conducts us; and though it is the highest peace, we cannot know it until we have it: self-denial goes before it; and the joy is found only as its crown. Those who reverse this order, and cannot stir till they take the hand of pleasure as

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 3, p. 326.

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their guide, may indeed attain the condition of fine animals; but are hopeless wanderers from the true light and blessedness of human life[1].

The union of the mind with God which constitutes human perfection is effected by the knowledge of truth and the love of virtue; for this is to see things as they really are, and appreciate them at their real worth; i.e. to have His knowledge and His love of them, so far as the limits of our nature permit. The identity between Divine and human knowledge consists in this: that God *has* neither senses nor imagination; and that we, so far as our ideas are clear, *use* neither senses nor imagination; so that, in both, the things known are apprehended as intelligible, without representation; and it is the light of God in our minds which gives them whatever intelligence they have. Similarly, love according to the law of virtue is love to God; for then we freely follow the impression of love in our heart by which God is always drawing us towards Himself, and pervert it into no self-love, or fascination with sensible things. 'To love according to the law of virtue is to love God alone; to love Him in all things, and love things as they partake of His goodness and perfection; i.e. to love them as they merit love; in a word, to live under the impression of the same love with which God loves Himself; for when we love as we ought, we are moved to that love with which God loves Himself and all related to Him. Therefore we then love as God loves[2].'

Why is it that, while all men ardently desire the perfection of their being, they yet do not concern themselves to deepen their union with God, which alone can bring them to that perfection? It is because, while every good renders them both more perfect and more happy, these two effects do not always and at once follow in the same degree; and in the competition between sensible and spiritual good under mutual interference, the former is readier with its gift

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 4.
[2] Ibid. V. 5, p. 335.

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of immediate pleasure, the latter offering a higher perfection, but a less clamorous joy. That which we take to be a part of ourselves, or to which we as a part belong, we naturally regard with love, the stronger the more close the union. The union is evidenced either by the instinct of Sense or the evidence of Reason. By the former we feel ourselves united with our body: our assurance of this arises from the pain or pleasure we experience in the contact with other bodies, e.g. from the difference it makes to us whether our clothes are torn, or a lock of hair is plucked out. We are thus led to fancy ourselves identified with the body; but if we listened to Reason, we should know that mind and body are two substances intrinsically heterogeneous and independent, and that the concomitance of their phenomena is due to the will of God and our union with Him; so that it is an illusion to suppose that sensible things have any claim to our regard as elements in our mental identity. With intelligible things,—the objects of thought,—the opposite holds good; our relation to them is no foreign conjunction, but inherent in the reason itself; which, moreover, we know to be not *our* reason but the universal Reason whereby all minds subsist in God. Without Him we are nothing, can know nothing, can feel nothing; He is the whole of what we are; and, were the body gone, would still be in the same intimate union with us, the cause of every other union, and the total proper object of our love. But this, which is clear to us in the light of reason, is not thrust upon our sensible experience; we do not see it, like the sun, or hear it, like the wind; and, through the effect of Sin, the impressions of Sense are more efficacious with their momentary illusions, than the dictates of Reason with their eternal truths[1]. And so the body, which ought to serve the spirit, sets up for itself, and intercepts, as a pretender, our just allegiance to God.

The errors into which we are betrayed by the affections are similar to those which have been noticed in treating of

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 5.

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the senses. As in that case we take for qualities in the body perceived the sensible phenomena which we experience, so in this we credit anyone whom we love or hate with a like feeling towards us. Nay, we are apt to assume that towards other objects he must direct the same sentiments as our own; and, by a similar illusion, to endow even the brutes with an inward life resembling ours. And the love which unites us to a friend hides from us all his defects and faults, turning his personal deformities into beauty, and elevating his common-places into effusions of genius. Hatred, on the other hand, is blind to every better feature in the object on which it fixes, and blackens the whole image it contemplates; and thus becomes fruitful in insult and injustice. For want of truth in these their prepossessions, such passions are liable to sudden revulsions; when you discover that your favourite dislikes you, your feeling turns round upon him, and you fancy yourself shamefully wronged: if your supposed enemy proves to be your lover, your penitent surprise sets him at once into higher favour than if you had never hated him. Such errors and inconsistencies appear on a more conspicuous scale, when multitudes are given up to the same affections, —to party spirit, in the Church or in the State: right and wrong are then determined no longer by reason and conscience, but by blind sympathy and pledged admiration. 'What is true in Spain is false in France; what Paris receives, Rome rejects; what the Franciscans take for certain, the Dominicans condemn as error. The latter hold by Thomas Aquinas; why? because the holy Doctor was one of themselves. The former embrace the doctrine of Duns Scotus, because he was a Franciscan.' Prejudices from this cause are even chargeable with cruel persecutions, extending to multitudes beyond the original object of hate: though Mordecai alone among the Jews had offended Haman, the whole race within his reach was involved in his revenge[1].

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 6.

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From the general characterisation of the affections, Malebranche proceeds to treat of them in detail, and, for that purpose, to reduce them to some rational arrangement. Were he to classify them according to the objects on which they are directed, the enumeration, he says, would be endless; for there is nothing open to human perception or imagination which may not fascinate or repel our feeling. Affections are not really differences in the external things to which they tend: whether a man sets his heart on obtaining a Marshal's baton or a Pontiff's crook, he is swayed by the same *love of honour*. Malebranche prefers therefore to seek a basis for division in differences among the affections themselves. To the whole order, constituted as it is by the sentiment experienced towards imagined good or ill, he prefixes one tendency which seems to stand alone, as not fulfilling this condition, and yet to be not referable to the pure reason; viz. *Wonder* or *Admiration*. It is the feeling into which we are thrown by the appearance of *anything new*, whether a total object or an accessory to an object already familiar; and its characteristic is simply to fix a keen attention upon it, not as good or bad, but as suitable to be scrutinised and understood. Hence the physiological concomitants are different from those which attend upon an affection; the animal spirits, on being sent to the brain, do not thence flow down into the muscles to produce action towards or from the object, or into the heart, and nerves, &c., to quicken the blood and occasion a vivid emotion; but stay there and spread their stimulus upon the organic fibres with whose changes thought is in correspondence. If, however, the object is something remarkable by its vastness or its insignificance, there will be the kind of feeling usually associated with these qualities, viz. of exaltation or slight, though still without any suggestion of good or bad; and hence the animal spirits will descend from the brain to the heart, for this feeling's sake, but not to the muscles with a view to any action. When we ourselves are the contemplated object of this feeling, the large scale on

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which any natural quality is found in us produces pride, its defective magnitude, abasement; not, however, in the *moral* sense, but as a mere relative self-estimation in the grade of natural being; involving in the whole body a demeanour of dignity or humility, visible also in the lower animals, except in birds, which can fly away from their superiors. All the natural operation of this sentiment is to establish true relations between ourselves and the beings around us; but, through our abuse of it, it becomes the source of many errors.

Whoever has the imagination in exceptional vigour is doubly tempted to a fatal self-applause; he is conscious of surpassing others in an attribute which shows off well in the eyes of men; and through this magnifying attribute itself he paints his case before his own eyes. Hence he is apt to be puffed up with conceit, to be imperious and scornful towards others, to be content with his attainments and dispense with further care for truth; especially as it is to him that men of the opposite type resort as disciples, to help them out of their feeble and confused conceptions. Surrounded by admirers, he cultivates only what wins their praise, not the higher wisdom that transcends him, but the shining accomplishments which attract them. The imagination is dazzled, and dazzles, by everything rather than the spiritual endowments of thought and holiness, which alone unite us to God; by display of personal gifts, of external splendour, of rare knowledge however worthless, of pompous or sparkling talk; and even learned men are not ashamed of contemptuously turning away from their own superiors for no better reason than their plain exterior. A scholar of this class, for instance, thought nothing of the Cartesian philosophy, because, after meeting and talking with Descartes, he noticed nothing extraordinary in him that should give him any claim to eclipse Aristotle; this was sufficient answer to all the reasoning of the new philosophy! 'I wish,' says Malebranche, 'that men of this stamp could see Aristotle as he really was when living on earth, and have

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some hours' conversation with him, not in Greek but in French, and without knowing his name till after they had given their opinion of him.' As the learned are captivated by antiquity, so are the weak and impressionable by rhetoric: they are always caught by 'magnifica ista verborum moles, the passionate flashes of declaimers; so vividly does this power work on their imagination, that they are astounded, worshipping the influence which prostrates and blinds them, and enraptured with confused emotions as if they were clear truths[1].'

In spite of these dangers, the feeling of Wonder has in itself a function of the utmost value. It fixes and concentrates our attention with an energy which the mere intellectual will would be unable to put forth; and where it is deficient, there is always a difficulty felt in earnest and protracted study; the thoughts wander; intruding images call off the mind; sensations of weariness deaden it; the links of reasoning drop off; and nothing is effectually done. But once let wonder be awake, with the curiosity which follows it, and the mental processes perform themselves with spontaneous alacrity, and at every step get nearer to the end in view. In all the sciences, therefore, wonder is the prime mover of successful action. It may, however, be too intense; detaining us upon some special point, bright to our feeling, it may prevent us from adequately contemplating its relations to surrounding conditions and similar objects, and by force of admiration may paralyse our knowing. If once we begin to rest in the mere pleasure of wonder, so that it suspends instead of quickening the intellectual powers, we become the ready prey of endless delusions, of fortune-tellers and magicians and false prophets. Against this danger, of which we need never be unconscious, it is possible to guard by disciplinary rules: e.g. where we are run away with on a line of feeling, we may, so to speak, reverse the engine, i.e. throw the mind upon some object interesting in the very opposite way; or, if a

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 7 (especially p. 356).

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less absolute change of direction is needed, look out for something that lies upon a divergent track on to which we can turn our course of thought; or, if these minor deliverances are too little ready, the eternal Sum of all good, the very Soul of our souls, is for ever at hand, to receive our surrender and answer our prayer[1].

Quitting this ambiguous phenomenon of Wonder, and entering on the series of proper affections, Malebranche comprehends them all under the general antithesis of Love and Hatred; the latter always presupposing the former and arising from its being hurt. In treating of Love, as thus the fundamental principle, he betrays a curious wavering respecting the origin of its forms. When he consults his metaphysic doctrine, he sees them all as the transfusion of the Divine love into our nature: God loves us and all the beings He has made; and the love we bear to ourselves and them is only a participation in His, and naturally has, on a reduced scale, the proportions and excellence of the original. But, on turning to the actual characters of men, Malebranche finds that they love objects only as belonging to themselves and ministering to the needs of their own being; and that their affection is graduated by the felt closeness of this personal relation. Not only wealth and honour, family and friends, are cared for as part of the individual's well-being; but even the State and the Church, nay even Truth and Justice, and God Himself, are similarly *appropriated* and embraced, as *his*. In this view, it would appear that Self-love is not only the dominant but the sole affection, of which all others are but the extension; and thus the former order becomes inverted; and we must say that 'God is ours,' instead of 'We are God's.' There are accordingly passages of moral psychology in Malebranche which read almost like the cynicism of Hobbes; and others which breathe the spirit of Master Eckhart and Tauler. The coexistence of the two conceptions was rendered possible to him by the doctrine of the Fall; the effect of which was to shift the

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 8.

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centre of gravity in human affections from God to self, and thereby to contort all the proportions of the moral life. In the real nature of things and our own ultimate consciousness, the love of God is all in all, and contains within it every lesser love; and this order is not going to be disappointed; it eternally asserts its truth; but we meanwhile have fallen from its apprehension and its power, and sunk into the measurement of all things by their relation to ourselves. Even thus, we betray the unquenched light when we reverence in others the disinterestedness and devotion which are lost in ourselves; and the whole purpose of the dispensation of Grace is to reinstate those who accept it in the first order of nature, and rebuild the ruined sanctuary of humanity. Thus, there are two editions, so to speak, of human nature, whence Malebranche may draw his portraitures; and it is not wonderful if their features do not always disclose their identity. The great distinction which separates him from Hobbes is, that the meaner movements of selfishness which, to the latter, are from the ultimate and total essence of our being, are by him represented as fundamentally unnatural, the temporary hallucination of a mind that has better knowledge in reserve.

The Love and Hatred which arise from the contemplation, respectively, of good and ill are, in Malebranche's view, the fundamental affections. From them he derives the three varieties which he calls *Primitives*, viz. Desire, Joy, Distress[1]. It would be easy to advance hence to more special affections, were it not that each of these is susceptible of many *degrees*; from which, in their possible combinations, the new modifications are endless and often anonymous. Each, however, has a certain number of distinct derivatives; e.g. *Desire* supplies hope, fear, suspense. *Joy* takes the form of cheerfulness (*alacritas*), exultation (*gloria*), favour, gratitude; *Distress* appears as disgust, weariness, grief, commiseration, indignation. And other passions arise from the combination of two or all of the Primitives; e.g. impudence,

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 9.

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anger, revenge, from *Desire and Joy;* shame, grief, indignation, from *Desire and Distress;* which two are also always present as partners in the exercise of the will. Malebranche, however, points out that even with the principal of these modifications, though reckoned as separate affections, the change introduced upon their original to make them specific is not properly *affectional*, but *intellectual;* e.g. *Hope* and *Fear* qualify the *Desire* whence they arise, not by throwing in an additional *passion*, but by contributing a *judgment*, viz. that the desire is likely or is unlikely to be realised. The process of judgment indeed clings closely to the affections. It *precedes* them; for the affection fastens on that which, on some evidence or other, be it of reason or of sense, *is deemed a good.* It *follows* them; for the affection is no sooner in operation than it enters into the estimate we make of the object pursued. In the former case there may be some suffrage of the reason, and therefore at least an admixture of truth; but in the latter, the feeling has usurped the place of power, and we judge of the object, not as it is in itself, but *as it affects us*, and that perhaps only in its *immediate* relation; so that what we believe under the impulse of an emotion is almost always false [1].

Of the sophistries thus created none are more conspicuous to others, more ensnaring to ourselves, than the excuses which every passion invents to justify itself; and which, though obviously looked up for this purpose, it gravely puts forth as if they were the ground of its existence. The extreme case may be seen in every madhouse, where the patient who believes himself a deposed king has always a more or less coherent story of the conspiracy which has robbed him of his crown, and of the combinations by which he means to outwit the traitors and return in triumph. His assumptions, supplied by his inflated self-importance, are his fixed ideas, which you in vain assail; and if, leaving them undisturbed, you argue from them against his delusions, you may probably meet your match. So is it with all the minor

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 10.

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insanities of predominant affection. If you give yourself up to some hatred of another, you must make out a case to warrant it; and so you put the worst construction on his words and conduct towards you, and trace malicious meanings in looks, in acts, or in omissions, purely accidental. You first see these things, because you hate him; and then, when you see them, you hate him more. And the corresponding illusions in lovers, by which the most homely beings are turned into gods and goddesses, and *proved* to be so by irrefragable evidence, have in all ages furnished amusement to the world. In these processes, blind feeling need never be at a loss for what it wants; the object, whatever it be, on which it is fixed, is sure, like all created things, to have its good and to have its evil; and either of these it can set in the focus of its vision, so as to perceive nothing else; and by the very truth of the parts it is cheated into falsehood about the whole. Such is the consequence of shifting the real centre of thought and viewing all things in their mere relation to ourselves, and *that* as measured by feeling and imagination. Reason, instead of ruling, is reduced to serve; no longer permitted to lead us by intellectual forethought, it is degraded to the finding of plausible afterthoughts to palm off a bad cause upon ourselves and others[1]. And the worst of it is that, in these perversions, the darker passions arising from the apprehension of evil are far more intense and wild than those which are fascinated by good. Hence the terrible effects of antipathy and fear, when their contagion seizes upon a multitude; especially in the religious form of false zeal, thinking to deserve the favour of God by yielding to blind impulses of violence and cruelty[2].

§ 7. *Rules for the Attainment of Truth.*

In the concluding book of his treatise Malebranche turns from the survey of error to the methods of truth. He starts from the fundamental Cartesian rule, that 'we are never to

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 11. [2] Ibid. V. 12.

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assent to propositions unless so clearly true that assent cannot be refused without an internal feeling of a certain punishment and secret reproach of reason; i.e. unless we cannot refuse assent without clearly knowing that to do so is an abuse of our freedom.' The conditions of this clearness are twofold; (1) in ourselves, straight or direct mental gaze (like the power of accommodating the eye to the objects' distance); and strenuous attention to the scrutiny of intelligible truths; (2) beyond ourselves, ideas for conceiving of things; if God did not (as the spiritual light of the world) supply these, we should no more know anything than see objects in the darkness. Since, however, by the immutable will of God, they are for ever present, even when we do not attend to them, all that is needed for maintaining clearness of apprehension is to render our mind closer in attention, and larger in capacity; not only in regard to objects in themselves, but in regard also to their numerous relations[1].

The difficulty which has to be overcome in gaining clear apprehensions of things arises from two opposite infirmities of our nature, the one lying in the Senses and Imagination, the felt phenomena of which are *modifications* of our mind; the other in the Reason, cognisant of *Ideas*, which are *objects* of the mind. The former no sooner come into play than they so excite and engage us that we have no eye for anything but our own feelings, and are self-inclosed in our personal mental changes; at least everything we look at is coloured by them and seen in false lights. Yet, on the other hand, when the reason is left alone, in the absolute sleep of our sensitive capacity, we are indeed united with God and in contact with His ideas, but without knowing of their presence; the sole proper *objects* of our intellectual perceptions of things are latent for want of *representation* in our consciousness. Thus, we are suspended in a position between false knowledge and no knowledge. The remedy must be sought in the *right measure* of sensitive excitement,

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, VI. 1.

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and the subordination of its proportions to the activity of the reason. All vivid sensations and emotions must be avoided; everyone knows how the mind is disabled for thought by noise, by too intense a light, by keen pain or pleasure, by agitating news, by eager affections. Though in this life we cannot dispense with some amount of awakened feeling, yet the purity and tranquillity of the imagination must be vigilantly guarded, and the ascendency preserved for the pure understanding[1].

It is a deplorable fact that the stimulus to the search for truth is often given by affections least akin to it, e.g. the love of reputation; which has carried many a mind, otherwise indifferent to knowledge, through great intellectual labour. But, in the service of such a motive, men are careless whether they cultivate a fruitful or a barren field; they go wherever the applauding multitude is found; they seek the startling rather than the true, the unique rather than the great, such as perpetual motion and the squaring of the circle; anything, in short, which will set them above others on the roll of fame. Far better than this morbid craving of the imagination is the desire of using the understanding well, of correcting prejudices, and of gaining light enough for right self-direction in life. Under the influence of such quiet but adequate motives, we shall escape the danger of judging by feelings instead of by the clear features of reality; yet shall apply the imagination to its genuine scientific use, viz. of furnishing, as in the diagrams of geometry, the aids needful to carry on the processes of thought otherwise too abstract or too intricate to be long pursued[2].

The sensible helps to accurate thought produce their effect in two ways; by facilitating and holding the mind's attention; and by extending its range of thought. The first of these benefits is conferred by geometry; the second by arithmetic and algebra. In both cases, the advantage is gained by resort to symbols of the ideas involved; consisting in the former of a particular representative instance,

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, VI. 2. [2] Ibid. VI. 3.

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picturing the truth evolved; in the latter, of less or more general terms exhibiting to the eye the relations of abstract quantities and the changes possible to them under given conditions. It is shown how, by lines of given measure and direction, the parallelogram of forces indicates the place at any moment of a body set in motion by two simultaneous impacts of known amount; and, under the law of accelerated motion of falling bodies, detects the parabolic curve of terrestrial projectiles; and how similar methods clear up the theory of the musical scale, and reduce mechanical science to exactitude. Though weights and movements are not lines and areas, yet, like these, they have their equalities and inequalities, which may be represented by them, and so brought into the field of vision and made to exhibit their history under variation. This it is which so greatly facilitates the mind's attention[1].

In showing the enlargement of intellectual range obtained by the use of arithmetic and algebra, Malebranche is somewhat embarrassed by his doctrine that neither can matter have more extension, nor mind more thought at one time than at another. If this is so, enlargement of mental capacity would seem to be impossible. He does not shrink from the paradoxical assertion, that there is no such thing as greater or less emptiness of mind; that the quantity of thinking is invariable; and that the only difference between the most torpid and the most effective intelligence is, that the former is droning over confused ideas of sense and imagination, or perhaps simply experiencing mere alimentary sensations, while the latter is intent on clear and true ideas, and busy in tracking their relations. If an equation of thought is established between these two, it is difficult to conceive what the unit of thought can be. However, it does not perhaps much matter whether the advantage of arithmetic and algebra is called a *clearance* or an *extension* of thought. At all events it enables us to follow the simple conception of equality and inequality through a complexity

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, VI. 4.

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of relations which else we could not penetrate and disengage; and so to solve with mechanical ease innumerable problems wholly beyond the grasp of mere unrecorded abstract thought. Malebranche wrote under the fresh influence of Descartes' great improvements in the application of mathematical analysis; and it is no wonder that, in his admiration, he looks upon the new methods as the sublimest instrument of reason, bearing a character almost Divine. Yet he is careful to say, that even these must retire before our quest of union with the infinite God[1].

§ 8. *Estimate and Ethical bearings of the System.*

In studying this interesting scheme of thought, it is impossible not to feel oneself in contact with a mind of much higher moral order than Descartes', if of less intellectual originality. Even in a work devoted to the methods of search, the chief differences which distinguish the disciple from the master are suggested, less by logical scruples, than by the desire to purify the mind from the self-incurred blindness of low passions, and recall it to the supreme good. No one can doubt that the resulting system commended itself to him as sustaining the aspirations, not only of the reason, but of the conscience under the highest calls of meditative piety. With Descartes we can hardly feel a similar assurance. Anxious though he is to clear his doctrine of objections from the ethical and religious side, it is rather lest the doctrine should suffer disadvantage, than lest it should be responsible for harm to the gravest interests of life: he speaks down to others' state of mind, more than ingenuously out of his own; and you are never sure, as with Malebranche, that there is no esoteric thought behind that which he chooses to put forth. Where we have to do with a mind acute as Malebranche's, this earnestness affords no slight intellectual presumption in favour of his specula-

[1] De Inquirenda Veritate, VI. 5.

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tions. Still, criticism must address itself, not to their sincerity, but to their consistency, and to the security of their foundations; and it is not without reason that both of these have been impugned.

(1) The dualistic assumption, which forms the basis of his natural philosophy, of the mutual exclusion of extension and thought, so that they constitute two worlds coexisting and intermingled, yet without common predicate or communication, and embrace all things in their parallel categories, is constantly insisted on as fundamental, and almost as constantly violated in application. Under which head are we to rank those wonderful 'animal spirits,' which, like Iris, messenger of the gods, flit to and fro between the earth and heaven of our nature, reporting aloft what is going on below, and taking back the answering orders for action? Are they material? or are they spiritual? As they are disclaimed for mind pure and simple, and are ascribed to its union with the body, and as their part is played in the field of sense and imagination, which perish with the body, they would seem to be corporeal. They are, moreover, described as thrown off or exuded from the blood, and perform a variety of movements, swift or slow, to select parts of the body, muscles, heart, viscera, and nerves. Yet, though thus busy with our organic history, they are not, as they ought to be, forbidden to go beyond. They flow to the internal parts, and we *feel;* they press upon the brain, and we have an *image* of sense or fancy, persistent in proportion to the depth of the cerebral vestige; and these are phenomena of the mind, which is by hypothesis foreign to all physical changes. It might indeed be said by the Cartesians: 'Up to this last term the mechanism goes; but stops short at the threshold of it; and the mental sequel is supplied by the immediate act of God; the physiologist has to arrest himself *somewhere;* and if we fix his terminus at the last undulation of the animal spirits, the Divine agency may as well enter there as at any earlier stage.' A reply of this kind, frankly adopting the 'animal spirits' into the mere

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bodily system, would certainly enable the theory to work[1]; but it is not within the meaning of the doctrine as propounded by the seventeenth century schools. When they said that matter could not transact business with mind, they thought of such matter as that with which mathematical physics deal; when they said that mind could not affect matter, they thought in like manner that a spirit, as such, could not, for example, throw a stone; and that no unitary nature could be made by kneading up together a ghost and a lump of clay. Starting from this type of conception, they endeavoured to treat the human being as a mechanical mixture of heterogeneous elements, of which one worked by the pure laws of motion, the other by those of thinking. But when they came upon phenomena difficult to class under either head, such as instinctive impulse and feeling, explicable by neither physics nor logic, a nondescript medium was set up between the two realms, with indeterminate relations to either, and fulfilling the office attributed, as I have mentioned, to ψυχή among the Greeks. Had this medium been regarded as simply *matter*, it would not have been called '*spirits*;' and where would have been the use of inventing it and its fictitious history, if it were not to smooth a way of transition from matter to mind by attenuation and vivacious movement in the former? If to append a mental feeling or thought to a bodily change needed the intervention of a Divine volition, the effect was as competent to that volition at first as at last; and there could be no reason for suspending it till to the initial and known change

[1] It must be admitted that this condition is sometimes really fulfilled. There are passages in Malebranche, at least in his later writings, which distinctly assign the 'animal spirits' to the bodily organisation. 'The Creator of bodies,' he says, 'is alone able to move them. This principle suffices to link together,—no, not to link, but to affiliate,—all our pretended faculties. For, after all, the *animal spirits are bodies*, however small they may be; they are but the more subtle part of the blood and humours. God alone then is able to move these small bodies; He alone understands how to make them run from the brain along the nerves, from the nerves through the muscles, from one muscle to its antagonist; all of which is indispensable to the movement of our limbs.' Entret. VII. pp. 249, 250.

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link after link had been added by mere hypothesis, as if to narrow the chasm which the will of God had to clear. Thus the theory, which begins by pronouncing the gulf impassable, except by miracle, ends with trying its hand at building a bridge across. This is rendered indubitable by the passage which I have already quoted (p. 190), affirming that 'the same cerebral agitation stirs the mind and the animal spirits.' The 'cerebral agitation' is at all events a movement of matter; and here it is said to give rise to effects both in the mind and in the 'animal spirits;' apparently at the same moment and on the same terms. Yet elsewhere we find Malebranche saying, 'your body cannot act immediately upon your mind. Thus, if your finger be pricked by a thorn, though your brain be disturbed by its action, neither the one nor the other can act immediately on the mind, because your brain and your finger are only matter[1].'

But the significance of Malebranche's dualism is destroyed by his adding to it a feature not borrowed from Descartes. The causality which had been cancelled between body and mind, had been retained between body and body, and within each mind itself. This residue of power in created objects Malebranche removes; he denies that one moving body can set another in motion, that one human thought can produce another; in both cases the consecution is due to the eternal efficiency of God, repeating at every instant the act of creation whence each first phenomenon arose[2].

[1] Entretiens, VII. pp. 222, 223.

[2] 'The force,' he says, 'which moves a body is only the efficiency of God's will, preserving it successively in different places. Suppose then that this ball is rolled, and that in the line of its motion it impinges on another at rest; experience tells us that this other will without fail be set in motion according to certain proportions exactly observed. Now it is not the first that moves the second. This is clear from the fundamental principle. For one body cannot move another without communicating to it some of the motive force. But the motive force of a body in motion is only the will of the Creator preserving it successively in different places. It is not a quality belonging to the body.' Entretiens, VII. pp. 242, 243. And, similarly, with regard to the mind of two persons conversing together, he says: 'We are both of us in union with the universal Reason which illumines all intelligences.' 'I am persuaded that there is no such thing as a visible object, nothing which can act in

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It is thus superfluous to insist that matter and spirit cannot act on each other, when they cannot even act on themselves; there is no distinction between the supposed chains of causation, if all alike are constituted by the energy of the Divine Reason or Will at every link.

The truth is, the doctrine of the mutual exclusion of body and mind arose from the treatment of them as different *Substances*, under the rule that no substance can have anything in common with another. This, however, could only be, so long as each was practically regarded as an *ultimate* of being. As soon as they came into distinct view as *things created*, the rule became inapplicable; because it was an admitted axiom that between cause and effect there must always be something in common; so that two products of one and the same cause are precluded from being entirely alien and, both by their dependence and by their common affinities to a higher term, become disqualified from further substantive pretensions. In Malebranche, this derivative character receives the intensest emphasis; the very foundations of the doctrine of dualistic parallelism are removed; and it lingers as a last shred of traditional thought which he has forgotten to fling into his basket of philosophical waste paper.

(2) The philosophy of Malebranche leaves no room for

the mind and reveal itself there, but the intelligible as well as efficient Substance of Reason. Nothing do we see in this material world where our bodies dwell, except so far as our mind intently moves in another, and contemplates the beauty of the intelligible and archetypal word contained in (the universal) Reason. As our bodies live upon the earth, and repair their waste on its fruitful products; so do our minds find their aliment on the same truths which the intelligible and immutable substance of the Divine Word contains. The words which Theodore addresses to my ear give me notice, in virtue of the laws of union between soul and body, to give heed to the truths which he discovers in the Sovereign Reason. My mind is thus turned in the same direction as his; I see what he sees, because I look where he looks. And by the words in which I answer his, however empty here and there, I am in communion with him, and with him enjoy a good which is common to all. For we are all united in essence with (the universal) Reason; so united, that without it, we can have no human tie.' Entretiens VII. pp. 256, 257.

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the conceivable coexistence and relation of finite beings and their infinite source; and, among finite beings, especially of *persons*. All the positive predicates of created objects are, one by one, taken away from them and delivered back to their Creator, not only as *having come* from Him, but as being now and for ever items of His agency, till all particular natures are absolutely emptied out, and there is left simply One Sole Cause, whose effects can never be on any other than Himself. All changes are His self-modifications. This extreme result is not left to mere inference by the reader; it is repeatedly expressed in terms the most direct. God is not *a Being*. He is *all Being*, or *universal Being*, covering the whole of what exists. 'The idea of God,' he says, 'i.e. of Being in general, Being without restriction, infinite Being, is no figment of the mind, of a composite nature that can involve a contradiction: nothing can be simpler, although it embraces whatever exists or can exist. This simple and natural idea of *Being or the Infinite*, includes necessary existence; for evidently *being* (I do not say *a particular being*) has existence *per se*, and being cannot but actually be.' 'Those who do not see that God exists are not thinking of *being at its full scope*, but of *an individual* being, and therefore of that which either may or may not exist[1].' Again, he says, 'That clear, intimate, necessary idea of God, i.e. of being, without any special restriction, of being in general, which presents itself to the human mind, acts on it more powerfully than the presence of all finite objects[2].' Still more explicit is the following account of the relation of God to finite natures: 'The soul is not in the body, nor the body in the soul, though their variations are reciprocal in virtue of the general law of their union; but both are in God, who is the real cause of this reciprocity. Minds are in the Divine reason, and bodies in the Divine immensity; but neither can be in the other: their essences are unrelated; with God alone have they necessary relation. Mind can think without body, but can know nothing save

[1] Recherche de la Vérité, IV. 11, p. 295. [2] Ib. III. ii. 8, p. 218.

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in the Divine reason. Body can be extended without mind; but can exist only in the immensity of God. The qualities of body have nothing in common with those of mind; body cannot think; mind cannot be extended; but both have participation in the Divine existence; God, who gives them their reality, is the possessor of that reality; for He possesses all the perfections of things without their limitations. He knows, as minds do: He is extended, as bodies are; but all in a way different from theirs: thus God pervades the universe and transcends it.' The interlocutor, to whom these words are addressed, finding them hard to understand, presses the question, 'Before the world was, and God's agency in it, where was He?' and in answer it is said: 'Before the creation of the world, God was where He now is, and where He would be were the world to return to nought. He was in Himself. When I tell you that God is in the universe, and infinitely beyond it, you do not enter into my thought if you suppose that the universe and space, as we imagine it, are, so to speak, the place which is occupied by the infinite substance of the Divinity. God is in the universe only because the universe is in God; for God is in Himself alone, in His immensity. If He created new spaces, He would not thereby acquire an extended presence; He knows neither new space, nor increment to His immensity. He is eternally and necessarily where these new spaces are created; but is not there locally, like the spaces. Extension is a reality, and in the Infinite all realities are found. God then is extended, no less than bodies are; for He possesses all *absolute realities*, i.e. *all perfections*. But God is not extended after the manner of bodies, not having the limitations and imperfections of His creatures. God, as well as created minds, has knowledge; but does not think after their manner. He is Himself the object of His knowledge. There is in Him no succession or variety of thoughts; one does not, as with us, exclude all others. Similarly, God is extended, no less than bodies; but His substance has no parts; and there is no exclusion

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of one part by another; the place of His substance is nothing but that substance itself. He is always one and always infinite, perfectly simple, and composed, so to speak, of all realities and all perfections. God is *Being*, and not *a being* (*tel être*), as He Himself said to His servant Moses by the mouth of His commissioned angel; being, without restriction, not finite being; being, compounded, so to speak, of being and non-being[1].' One further remark deserves citation, as anticipating an important feature in Spinoza; viz. that although body and spirit include all the created natures, therefore all the aspects of the Divine essence known to us, we are not to *assume* that no others exist: God is infinite; and the contents of His being cannot be estimated by the samples shown to us of His countless perfections. Hence, though it is quite right to say that '*God is a Spirit*,' in order to indicate that He is *not corporeal*, and that He is much rather spirit than body, yet we must beware of taking the proposition *absolutely*, and so of carrying into His nature the features of mind copied from our own experience[2].

Now let us see in what light this doctrine exhibits (in the first place) our own nature, whether on the cognitive or on the active side. The relation of dependent union of the human with the Divine mind, is marked by two sets of terms, describing two modes of identification; one affirming unity of the apprehensive act in us and in God; the other, unity of the thing apprehended. The former we have when Malebranche says that Reason is not personal, but universal; that the human intellectual faculty is a fiction, being only a local gleam of an omnipresent light; that God is the illumination of all minds; that our thought is (*ad modum recipientis*) His thought, and our love His love. If these expressions have any determinate meaning, they forbid us to appropriate to our own subjectivity the intelligent acts of which we are conscious, and require us to regard them as a

[1] Entretiens, VII. 279–283.
[2] Recherche de la Vérité, III. ii. 9. 227, 228.

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partial incidence of the Divine thinking. Is it possible to form any clear and consistent conception of such a relation between man and God? Can we bring under it any particular instance of rational apprehension, e.g. our knowledge that the surface of a sphere is equal to the area of a circle of twice its diameter? When you think this equation, and deduce it from essential properties of sphere and circle, to what mind's consciousness does that fact belong. Have you reasoned it out? or is it only God? If He be the sole subject of the process in your case, He is no less so in every other; and though there be a million recognitions of the truth, there is but one thinker for all these thoughts. To extract any such meaning, or rather no-meaning, out of what is called the *universality of Reason* is to play tricks with words. What is there '*universal*' in this geometrical equation? Simply this: that *any mind* may apprehend it; you may know it; I may know it; God knows it; it may repeat itself to consciousness wherever there is any intelligence for its seat. But all these acts are numerically distinct, and are counted by the list of knowers who realise the truth: they are separate conditions of individual consciousness in which no partnership is possible. Every cognition, by the very meaning of the term, is the act of an Ego or personal subject; that which makes an Ego is a twofold condition; viz. (1) the continuous identity of subject for many successive cognitions, and (2) the non-identity of this subject with any other, or the exclusion from it of any acts of cognition simultaneous with its own. Of this Ego, or soul, of ours, Malebranche declares that we have absolute assurance by self-consciousness,—not indeed of its essence, but of its existence as a reality; how is it possible, after thus setting it up as a known separate entity, to cancel its status and hand over its contents to another subject? The dictum that God illumines all minds is true, if we are to understand by it that He qualifies them to know (in their degree) what He knows; but false, and indeed senseless, if it asserts that their knowing and His knowing are one and the same

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act of knowledge. The comparison with the sun in heaven will not relieve so great a paradox. The daylight is indeed, as Plato says in no dissimilar connection, in many places at the same time, and, though a single element, enables myriads of men to see; but this common presence does not fuse all exercises of sight into one: none the less are there ten thousand acts of vision, each the incommunicable predicate of a separate subject. If these particular agents are explained away in order to leave the 'universal reason' as the sole subject and all-absorbing cause, it follows that it would make no difference whether there were human minds or not; or whether, if there were, they knew anything or did not know; and we might apply rigourously to the intellectual consciousness of the universe what is poetically said of its life,—

> 'The eternal fire that feeds each vital frame,
> Collected or diffused, is still the same:'

and whether a million people, or only Euclid, apprehended our proposition, or it were known to none but God, it would in any case be known only once, as a constituent in the eternal reason. This surely is absurd. The same considerations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the asserted identity of our love with God's love. We have only to ask the question whether, if we love and if He loves, there are two lovers or one, and we shall realise the contradiction which the assertion involves; especially on considering that, if there be only one, the apparent mutuality of affection is an illusion, and the forthgoing love is thrown back into self-love, i. e. ceases to be love at all.

Malebranche's second mode of identifying the human with the Divine mind is, by giving them the same *objects*, instead of making them the same subject. The things known by both are said to be *Ideas*, or the *intelligible* aspect of things, as distinguished from the *material*. It is not easy to convey a distinct notion of what is meant by these 'ideas.' But if you assume as true two propositions, viz. (1) that *extension* as such, i. e. Body, cannot have any dealings with thought,

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so as to get known; and (2) that we actually have knowledge of bodily things, being able to reason about them, and to verify our reasoning; it follows that, over and above their corporeality, they must carry something intellectual, enabling them to speak to our thinking nature. This spiritual something is their 'Idea.' It is not dependent on their actual material existence; if there had never been any sphere or circle marked out in the infinite space, it would still have been true that the surface of any sphere equals the area of a circle of twice its diameter; and this truth must have been present to omniscient thought prior to the formation of solids and the demarcation of areas, and so have constituted the *object* of that thought. On the question whether it was *always* there, a remarkable difference exists between Descartes and Malebranche. The former, if we construe his language strictly, makes all truth, even geometrical, dependent on the Creator's *Will*, which sets up and might take down all the relations, mathematical and ethical, defined by the sciences: it is therefore a matter of volition that there is such a field at all as that of the true and false, of the right and wrong: God can make anything true and anything right that He pleases. Malebranche, on the other hand, insists on the eternal and immutable character of both quantitative and moral truth, and places it beyond the reach of any will, even the Divine: it was never *made* necessary, but always was so; not indeed *imposed* on God by any extraneous existence; but, while interior to His infinite nature, present there on such terms as to supply the *data* of contemplation to His intellect, and of movement to His will. Hence, Ideas, in their pre-existence, are the *archetypes* of created things; in their embodiment are the *essences* of things; and in their relation to us are what we know of things. On them therefore the intellectual gaze is fixed, of God beforehand and for ever, of ours afterwards; and the thought which meets on them, be it Divine or human, is the same. In attending to any particular thing, we are engaged upon its idea, which is and ever has been

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in God's mind, and are therefore attending to a particular perfection of His. All ideas are in Him; in Him it is that we see them; and as He too contemplates them there, there is no difference in the knowledge except in range; to the limits of our finite nature, ours coalesces with His.

Though, however, we were to grant the doctrine of ideas, still, sameness in the object of thought does not constitute sameness in the thinkers, or justify the language in which Malebranche speaks of their *union* in act and in nature. You and I may contemplate one given truth; but the contemplations will be two, though our conceptions be only numerically distinguishable; the singleness of object does not destroy the plurality of the subjects; either the consciousness of the truth occurs twice over, or it does not; if it does not, either you or I disappear from the scene and are not there; if it does, the minds are two and not one, nor is one a part of the other. And so must it be between the human and Divine mind, unless self-consciousness be denied to the intellect of God. Whatever be the 'idea' to which I attend, my thinking of it is a *subjective fact* distinct from the existence of the idea. If God contemplates that idea, His thinking of it is *another subjective fact*, distinct from the existence of the idea; and as these subjective facts are not predicable of one and the same self-consciousness, they cannot be merged into each other, and reduced to unity. They are separate modifications of different minds.

Of this inevitable conclusion Malebranche must have had some inkling; for he sets up a special doctrine in order to fence it out. He artificially limits the field within which he admits 'modifications of mind:' they are confined, he says, to the senses and imagination; and do not enter the area of the Reason. The changes and differences of sensation, representation, of emotion, impulse, will, are phenomena of the subject, modes of mental susceptibility, lights and shades of the personal history. But the varieties of the reason are exclusively *Ideas*, which are not our modes of thinking but the objects of our thought, extrinsic to our personality, and

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not to be reckoned among subjective vicissitudes. On this principle, identity of idea would be identity of reason; and all rational contemplation of a given object, however distributed or concentrated, would be referable to one universal mind. For this restriction of personality to the senses and imagination there does not appear to be the slightest ground. Nor is it secured by withholding from ideas the name of 'modifications of the mind.' For if they are 'objects' thought of by the reason, the reason has not only to hold them, but *to think of them;* and is certainly modified according as it thinks of A, or B, or C[1]. That the ideas are stationary and eternal does not hinder the attention to them from being shifting and transitory; and so we are reintroduced, within this sacred region, to the personal modifications of consciousness. To claim for the reason an object of thought, yet deny to it a subjective modification, is a contradiction in terms.

Malebranche's process, then, of unifying the Divine and the human reason, makes their coexistence, as rational, impossible: the human resigns its individuality and lapses into the infinite element, like a wave, which seems to be an advancing body with a horizontal run, but is really but a vertical movement on a stationary deep. The eternal thought is but the totality of these infinite undulations, actual and possible; and has its infinitude and perfection, not in being their *other*, but in being their *All.* This evanescence of particular minds in the universal, unintended by Malebranche, yet the inevitable result of his positions, he would himself acknowledge to be at variance with the primary postulates of all knowledge.

It is hardly needful to show, by applying a corresponding line of reasoning to the *active* side of our nature, how its individuality also disappears when Malebranche's doctrine is

[1] Malebranche himself. in enumerating the modifications of the mind, elsewhere includes *ses propres intellections*, as Professor Sidgwick has reminded me (Mind. xxxix, p. 432). None the less does his language, cited in the text and often repeated, exclude them. On this point, he is not self-consistent.

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pressed home to its results. He retains, in terms, Descartes' assertion of our liberty as moral agents; and speaks as if it were a liberty even towards God, i.e. to conform or not to the Divine will. He states, for instance, that 'God has made us such that we can follow or not follow a natural and indispensable law; and therefore, as a necessary consequence, such as to be susceptible of punishment or reward. Yes; if we are free, it follows that we have the alternative of happiness or misery; and if we have the alternative of happiness or misery, it is a sure proof that we are free[1].' When, however, we consult him about the exact contents and meaning of this free agency, it first seems doubtful whether the possession is not illusory; and then, whether the possessor himself exists, i.e. whether, if there be the alleged power, a competent Ego can be produced to wield it. The active energy of our being, i.e. our *will*, is the aggregate of our natural inclinations, working under the conditions of the bodily *παθήματα*. These inclinations are to our minds exactly what motion is to bodies; in neither case belonging to the essence; in both, the immediate impression of the Divine agency continuously administered, moment by moment. Further, the passive conditions amid which these inclinations work, are due to the union with the mind of a body which could never transmit any influence, did not God Himself directly interpolate a feeling or an image between the last cerebral and the first mental change, in each sensible experience. Hence, both these dynamic factors, the primary force and the modifying condition, are Divine; and they constitute the total causality. It is expressly declared that *our essence carries none*, and that none would ever step in, but for the interposition of God. What room then can there be for *liberty* under these superinduced influences? Malebranche finds it in the *intellectual judgment* which Reason forms about the pleas offered by natural inclination on the one hand, and the modifying feelings on the other; the former we know to present some

[1] Entretiens, VIII. p. 307.

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form of the true good embraced in the love of God; the latter to recommend at best only what is good for *the body*. Our *assent*, that is, is due to the former, and we are free to assent to it; and if, instead of this act, we yield to the passive tendency towards ease and pleasure, we neglect to use our freedom, and assent to what we are aware is false. Or rather, to avoid conceding to us any *positive* power, such as would be involved in *deciding against evidence*, Malebranche allows us only freedom to *suspend* our assent; which we can always do, he says, till clear and indubitable evidence obliges us to give it. This freedom is the compensation for our ignorance and imperfection; we need not decide while these are confusing us; but can wait for distinct vision, and move only when we see our way. At the same time that he asserts this as a possibility and a duty, he denies that it is 'a faculty of our nature;' declares that the capacity for it is very different in different men; and that 'without pain we cannot prolong reflection, far less suspend our assent, i.e. the judgment which determines the movements of mind and of body. Whenever a good presents itself to the soul, and draws it by some charm, it is not at ease if it remain stationary; for there *is no harder work* than to stand fast in a current; cease your action, and you are borne away[1].' In spite therefore of the alleged *negative or suspensive character* of this liberty, it turns out, after all, to be '*hard work*,' involving an *active effort* that cannot for an instant be dropped; none the less is it *a force* for being spent in resistance instead of in motion. Where then is the agent exercising that force? Whence is the resistance? The tendency withstood is the eagerness of the senses or imagination for what charms them; the withstanding effort is from the rational inclination for more indubitable good. This inclination belongs to the contents of our *Will*; the whole of which, as we have seen, Malebranche resolves into the immediate and perpetual impulsion of God, and affirms to be as little inherent in the finite soul as motion in created

[1] Traité de Morale, ch. vi. 6.

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bodies. So that the alleged liberty is removed from the human stage of being to the Divine; and as the same is true of the force which it resists, the whole game of conflict in which we seem to be in the lists is conducted between two attributes or energies of God. This is the ultimate meaning of the frequent assertions that our finite natures are absolutely 'impotent;' that our 'liberty is no faculty;' that we are not agents but spectators of even our own history; that we have no causality, God being the only cause. It is in the interest of the same theory that Will itself, the sum total of apparent activity in us, is made to consist of *affirmation and denial*, and regarded as interchangeable with *assent* given or withheld. It is thus resolved back into an intellectual function, and identified in its essence with *Reason;* and is therefore removed, along with the Reason in man, from the properties of the finite Ego, into the sphere of the universal Reason; which accordingly engulfs our entire personal nature; not only absorbing all our powers, but melting away the very subject in which they might be lodged.

(3) In its doctrine of God, Malebranche's system is not self-consistent; intending to be Theism, it becomes Pantheism; and, among pantheistic schemes, it ranges sometimes with the transcendental, at others with the immanental.

That his habitual idea of God retained in it all the features essential to Christian devotion and personal relations with the object of worship, there can be no doubt. The 'perfection' which he predicates of the Divine nature, though at times apparently interchangeable with the quantitative term 'infinitude,' is not yet stripped of its *moral* significance and used in the Spinozistic sense of '*reality*' or *complete inclusion of all that is;* but is distinctly stated to embrace the attributes not only of understanding and will, but of wisdom, goodness, justice, compassion[1]. And as the love of these virtues is declared to be in us only the finite form of God's own love for them, the attributes must be understood as essentially the same in both natures. Male-

[1] Entretiens, VIII. passim.

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branche, moreover, deviating from Descartes' denial of final causes, habitually speaks of God's *designs*, and though finding them only within the Divine nature itself, treats them distinctly as ends in view, thoughts or preconceptions whence the creative will passes into expression in the universe. The Divine administration of the world is conducted on a principle of *probation*, involving liberty in man and moral awards to him by his Creator. All these are plain characteristics of a sincere Theistic faith, which certainly lay deep in the heart and mind of Malebranche.

Consistently to maintain this position, however, certain conditions must be observed. For the exercise of Will, there must be objects amenable to it. For the operation of love, of goodness, of compassion, there must be other beings present, with the sensitive and moral qualities which earn these affections. And a world administered with justice must be constituted of *persons*, that is, of those who have a certain range of independent and fiduciary power. Are these conditions fulfilled by Malebranche?

His philosophy probably had an earlier and a later phase. At first, fresh from Descartes, he was possessed with the conception of a dual universe of extension and thinking, and worked it out on the principle of parallelism. Body, he assumed, could act upon body; mind upon mind; but neither upon the other. This was their nature, and lay in their very essence. There was therefore such a thing as natural causality, within the limit of its proper line. But then, over and above what was thus brought about, experience showed that the events on the two lines kept time together, advancing in uniform double file, the same cerebral fact having always the same mental fact for its companion. This was *supernatural*, secured by immediate and constant Divine agency.

In this compound of Nature and God, let us now see what account is given of the former. Its two factors, extension and thinking, are both of them inherently in God, not inventions or creations of His. They are of His essence;

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whence, as derivative essences, they constitute the matter and mind of the universe. From each of these essences flow the properties, and from the properties the particular phenomena, of these parallel departments of nature. What we call essences, when referred to the objects created, are *ideas* when referred to the creative intellect. And these ideas, as we have seen, Malebranche affirms to be not products but data of the Divine reason, eternal, immutable, and archetypal. It follows that none of the essences of things could be other than they are; and that all that happens along the lines of material and mental change is necessarily evolved. In calling God *the Author* of things as they are, in the physical and spiritual world, we must not understand that He determined their nature by selection, any more than the circle chooses 90° for the angle which a radius makes with the tangent at its extremity; that nature inevitably results from His nature, and is indeed nothing else than its direct expression.

Thus the cosmos turns out to be, in part the necessary nature, in part the free will, of God; its essences and properties being determined by the former; the synchronisms of its phenomena by the latter; the one containing only what God *is;* the other, what He *does.* Both are *supernatural,* if we use that word as coextensive with *Divine at first hand.* If we allow the words 'nature' and 'natural' to be carried back behind the phenomenal order into what is immutable in God, then the synchronisms, being volitional, are alone supernatural; the rest, natural; but still, both identified with God.

In this first phase, therefore, already the All is God; there are no *second causes;* there is no nature but His nature; no will but His will. And this is strictly what we mean by Pantheism.

It would seem, however, as if Malebranche had repented of allowing so much scope to the cogency of the eternal 'ideas,' and the necessary sequence from them of the essences and ulterior properties and ultimate phenomena of things, whether in extension or in thought. He apparently

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did not like to have the necessity quit its fountain head and travel down the chain; it seemed to invest each link with the prerogative of setting up the next; though in reality it was but the logical pre-requisite. He was jealous for the undivided rights of the Supreme Source; and lest any shred of causality (αἰτία) should escape thence under the disguise of rational consequence (λόγος), he recalled or disclaimed any leave *for power* to pass down from the essence of God into the essence of things. He permitted them *to be* what they must be by reasoning themselves out from their premisses, but to *do* nothing; for *motion*, that is action, could be *reasoned into them* from nothing, nor out of them into anything; it was no logical product, and could be transmitted by no deduction. Created things, therefore, their essences and properties, were *impotent;* and if body could move body, and thought excite thought, it lay not in themselves to do so, but a power from the primal source stepped in and effected the change. Thus, the miracle of synchronism is no longer solitary; it is supported on either hand by a separate and perpetual miracle of succession; and the entire dynamics of the universe are resolved into the immediate volition of One Will. The change in this second phase of doctrine consists in a different partition of the universe between the necessary and the free attributes of God; the province of the latter is enlarged at the expense of the former, and volitional agency is made accountable for all that begins or ceases to be. The supernatural, in the more restricted sense of the word, gains new fields, and governs the whole territory of phenomena.

The result, in spite of this modified division of its contents, comes out in similar terms. The universe is constituted by what things are and what they do. The former, that is, their essences, are the form of the *One Reason;* the latter, that is, their powers, of the *One Will.* The total, therefore, is the aggregate of the eternal necessity and the eternal freedom of God. There is nothing but God; He is not only Sole Cause, but entire effect; He is All in all.

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How little suspected or intended was this result by Malebranche himself is curiously illustrated by a passage in his Dialogues, in which he attacks, not without vehemence, a recent doctrine which identified the universe and God. One of the interlocutors had shown some interest in this doctrine, without eliciting reply, dropping, for instance, the remark: 'From what you say, I can well understand that that impious man of our time who made the universe his God, had no God; he was a genuine atheist[1].' The same speaker, determined apparently to elicit from his teacher some judgment on this opinion, afterwards affects to adopt it, and says: 'We are a part of the Divinity; the infinitely perfect Being is the universe; it is the aggregate of all that is.' 'This again!' says his teacher. 'Do not suppose, Theodore, that I am impious and senseless enough to give in to these dreams; but I am delighted to learn from you how to refute them. For I have heard say, that there are minds corrupt enough to be fascinated with them.' Theodore: 'I do not know, Aristes, whether we can quite depend on what is now said of certain people; and whether even the ancient philosopher who conceived the opinion which you adduce ever believed it. For, though there are few extravagances too great for mankind, I would willingly believe that the authors of such chimeras have scarcely put faith in them. For, after all, the author who has revived this impiety agrees that God is the infinitely Perfect Being. This being so, how could he have believed that all created beings are but part or modifications of the Divinity? Is it a perfection to be unjust in one's parts, unhappy in one's modifications, ignorant, senseless, impious? There are more sinners than honest men, more idolaters than faithful: what disorder, what conflict, between the Divinity and its parts! what a monstrous, frightful, absurd chimera! A God necessarily hated, blasphemed, set at nought, or at all events ignored by the greater part of Himself; for how few think of acknowledging such a Divinity! A God who is necessarily either

[1] Entretiens, VIII. p. 289.

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unhappy or unconscious in the majority of His parts and modifications! A God punishing Himself, administering retribution to Himself! In a word, a being infinitely perfect, yet composed of all the disorders of universe! What notion can be more replete with evident contradictions? Certainly, if there are people who can accept a counterfeit God so monstrously conceived, it is either that they do not want sight of one at all, or else there must be minds with a native tendency to seek in the idea of the circle for all the properties of the triangle. Believe me, Aristes, no man of sense has ever been convinced of such a craze, though several persons have maintained it as if they were well convinced of it. For so whimsical is self-love, that it can furnish motives for inducing boon-companions to trust one's profession of such belief, and for wishing to appear convinced of it. But it is impossible really to believe it, if you have ever so little capacity for reasoning, and fear of illusion. Those who maintain it cannot have been inwardly persuaded of it, unless the corruption of their heart had so blinded them, that the attempt to enlighten them would have been mere waste of time[1].'

Who was the anonymous reviver of ancient Pantheism that was the 'occasional cause' of this outburst? It can hardly be any other than *Spinoza*, whose posthumous Ethics had been published eleven years before, and had elicited several replies likely to be known in France; especially by Aubert de Versé[2], and Pierre Poiret[3]. The latter is pretty certain to have been familiar to Malebranche, and to have fixed his attention on Spinoza's doctrine; for Poiret, like himself, was at once a distinguished Cartesian, and in sympathy with the mystical devotion of the 'Theologia Germanica,' and the French Quietists. In the very titles of

[1] Entretiens, VIII. pp. 315-317.

[2] L'impie Convaincu, ou Dissertation contre Spinoza. Dans laquelle on réfute les fondemens de son Athéisme. Amsterdam, 1684.

[3] Fundamenta Atheismi eversa, sive specimen absurditatis Spinozianæ. Amstel. 1685. (Appended to a second edition of the Treatise Cogitationes Rationales de Deo, anima et malo.)

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these replies, the epithets 'impious' and 'atheist,' applied in the foregoing citation, are given to Spinoza, as if they had passed into current use. As the unnamed writer, though 'of our time,' is spoken of in the past tense, it is obvious that he was no longer living; and the charge brought against him, of making the universe his God, is precisely that which early assumed the foremost place in the Spinozistic controversy, and, even when based only on his Theologico-political Treatise, drew forth from Bredenburg, in 1675, a refutation in the form of geometrical proof. If, as these reasons render probable, Spinoza is the object of Malebranche's attack, it is curious to witness the antagonism of two philosophers who were destined ever after to be regarded as allies; and to observe that the offence in Malebranche's eyes was in effect the same that was to be brought home to himself. Whether he had any unconfessed apprehension of this, and wished to have the first word for self-protection, must be left to conjecture; but, though in a few years he was repeatedly accused of Spinozism, I am not aware that at the date of the Dialogues he had incurred any such imputation. That the affinity of his doctrine with Spinoza's should conceal itself from him, in spite of its logical certainty, is conceivable enough from the different order in which it arose in the two cases. In both, God and the universe were identified. But Spinoza translated God into the universe; Malebranche transfigured the universe into God. The one made over infinitude to Nature; the other reduced Nature to zero. To rigorous thought the difference may be nothing; but to feeling it may be everything.

I have said that Malebranche wavers between the immanental and the transcendental relations of God to the world. When he says that 'God is extended, like bodies,' yet is not body, and we ask 'Wherein lies the difference?' the answer is, 'In Him it is *intelligible extension;* in body it is *actual extension.*' If we further ask, 'Do these then differ from each other in range?' the answer is, 'No, both are infinite.'

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Now, intelligible extension gives, so to speak, the range of God; actual extension gives the range of the universe; both being infinite, they are the same. Here then we have the immanental theory, which also underlies the expression that God is 'the Infinite, whose property it is to be at the same time One and All things;' that He is the totality of being, universal being, and not a being among beings; that 'He alone, the infinite, the indeterminate being, or the *infinite infinitely infinite*, can comprise the reality infinitely infinite which I see when I think of Being, and not of such and such beings, or of such and such infinities[1].' Here we have the very same predicates employed to indicate the range of being in God and in the universe of being. Yet we meet with phrases no less distinctly cast in the transcendental mould; e.g. when he says, that 'the Divine Substance is everywhere, not only in the universe, but beyond[2];' that it is less true to affirm 'God to be in the world, than the world to be in Him, or in His immensity; just as eternity is not in time, but rather time in eternity[3].' Appeal might perhaps be also made to the caution against regarding extension and thinking as the only attributes of God, because they are the only ones that make our world; were it not that, in admitting innumerable others unknown to us, he would also admit along with them corresponding other worlds similarly unknown to us. But, at all events, the supernatural synchronism by which, in our nature, mind and body are made to go together, affords a plain example of Divine intercalation into a presupposed system of nature. In this view, God is regarded as *All nature and something more*. Not only was this always the preponderant character of Malebranche's Pantheism, but, as time went on, the 'something more' continually encroached upon the 'All nature,' till the whole was enwrapped within its blaze; the free-will of God gained upon His necessary nature, till the

[1] Entretiens, II. pp. 42, 43.
[2] Ibid. VII. p. 274.
[3] Ibid. VIII. p. 276.

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order of the world and the vicissitudes of men became incidents of His life and traits of His sole activity.

(4) The Ethics of Malebranche inevitably contain the same heterogeneous and incompatible elements as the philosophy on which they rest; assuming the free-will and responsibility of man, yet rendering them inconceivable in presence of the sole causality of God. Moral obligation implies a sphere in which we can do something of ourselves: the 'absolute impotence of the creatures' means that we can do nothing of ourselves. As Malebranche asserts both, one part of his system destroys the other. The mode in which he tried to reconcile the two was by dispensing, as far as possible, with the demand for *power* in morals, and forcing them into the category of *intellectual judgments*, and giving them the aspect of *assent* to truth, due to the necessary influence of evidence. Throughout the Cartesian school the tendency was always strong to identify the Understanding and the Will; Descartes himself differencing them not in their nature but in their range,—the Will affirming more than the Understanding; Spinoza making them unconditionally the same; Malebranche maintaining the intermediate position, that they ought to be the same[1], and would be so, as soon as the will learned to suspend its affirmation till the understanding made it too. By thus attenuating the functions of the will to a mere *abstinence* from movement, he thought that he had silenced its claim to any energy of its own, and handed over the whole business of determining this or that to the understanding. So long, however, as assent is suspended *against the pressure* of passions from the bodily side, and is suspended not *for us* but *by us*, it is not inert; and precisely because it is not inert, and is exercised by the Ego, there is a moral crisis wrapped up in it. However narrow may be the corner into which free-will is driven,—be it no more than the opening

[1] Traité de Morale VI. 12: Les jugemens de la volonté ne doivent pas avoir plus d'étendue que les perceptions de l'esprit. Il faut suivre, pas à pas, la lumière, et ne pas la prévenir.

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or shutting the eyes,—on it depends, and by it is saved, the possibility of moral obligation. It matters not whether the executive power which carries out a volition be ours or God's, provided that the *determination of it hither or thither* rests with us. And with us Malebranche's 'liberty of the mind' means to leave it, in spite of his denial of its facultative nature, and his attempt to convey over all our forces into the omnipotent hand. Enough escapes unseen from this transfer to afford a base for his ethical doctrine.

The conception which Malebranche formed of the relation between our 'liberty' and God's power is highly characteristic. There are two systems of Order prevailing in the universe. Both of them are Divine; one, from the inner essence of God as eternal and universal Reason; the other, from the free volitional power of God as Creator of all. The first is the immutable *Law* of God, the order of *His own perfection*, and, as imparted to us, of our relative and dependent perfection of truth and righteousness. The second is the *Energy* of God, the order of *Nature*, the scheme of *instituted general laws* which He has set up, not for man in particular, or spiritual beings collectively, but for ends of wider scope, attainable only by steadfast adherence to the methods selected. These two systems by no means coincide in their phenomenal particulars; and though God always wills in harmony with the former on the universal scale, yet His acts, taken in detail, often contravene it, and impair the good which is recognised by His and our eternal law. He forms monsters, and sends destructive avalanches and floods; not to mar the beauty of life, or to lay waste the field of human industry, but in fidelity to uniformities so beneficent or just in their total sweep as to absorb these qualifying inconveniences. What we have to follow and obey is the eternal order, not the order of nature; and where it is possible for us, by resisting the spontaneous consequences of the latter, to bring it into closer accord with the former, e.g. by diverting a torrent, or irrigating a desert,

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or combating a disease, we are obedient to God in correcting His work[1]. He indeed Himself is still the agent there, for we are but 'occasional causes,' and He is the executant of our volitions; having engaged Himself to be so, whether they be right or wrong. Our position, therefore, is simply that of workers of signals at our several stations; we make signs to Him to cause this or that; He binds Himself to do it, whether it be conformable or not with the supreme order. Thus, 'though we can do no one any good or harm by our own power, we can *oblige God* by our practical desires, in virtue of the laws of union between soul and body, to do good and harm to other men; for it is we who will the movement of tongue and arms, but God who alone can effect it[2].' In this view, God places His power at our disposal *pro re natâ*, instead of lending us a store of it for our own keeping, sufficient for us to draw on through life.

In representing Moral distinctions as objects of *Rational* discernment, Malebranche did not mean to say that, in a conflict and decision of conscience, the *matter judged* was of the same kind with that involved in a conclusion of the understanding; or that the purely quantitative ideas which suffice for logical procedure would also supply ethical results. He would not, I suppose, have denied that the conditions of intellect are conceivable without any perception of the contents of character; only, such intellect would have only one side of that larger '*Reason*' which he predicates of God and man. The main interest in which he puts mathematical and moral certainty under the same head is, that he may claim them both as having the same security of *intuition*, notwithstanding their difference of kind; and so be able to treat them as the common data of all known minds. He was intent on universalising morals, as all men agree to universalise geometry; and emphasised the eternal and immutable character of Right by planting it in the essence of God, side by side with truth similarly eternal and immutable. From that infinite Source he derived, in the order of

[1] Traité de Morale, I. 20–23. [2] Ibid. XV. x. 8.

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being, the insight possessed by the human conscience, no less than the axioms of the human understanding: the Divine 'order is graven on the heart of man, and he has but to retire into himself to learn it[1];' and not he alone, but any other thinking nature in the universe; 'for all minds contemplate the same primary objects of intelligence, and necessarily find there the same relations of magnitude, the same speculative truths; they find there also the same truths of conduct, the same laws, the same order, when they apprehend the relative perfection prevailing among the objects of intelligence included in the same reality of Divine Wisdom' (literally, 'in the same substance of the Word[2]'). And this reading of the inward heart-writing is by immediate vision, and not by inferential judgment: it is the characteristic of *truth alone*, of *real relations*, to be self-revealing, so that one has nothing to judge, except that there they are, clearly visible[3]. Since the order of knowing is the inverse of the order of being, this doctrine, when read backwards, is tantamount to saying, that our inward conscience carries, in its essential beliefs, the witness of an eternal and immutable moral order: our own intuitions are the evidence of it,—the only evidence there could be; for if the first principles of knowledge do not tell the truth, how else can it ever pass into a mind of which these are the sole threshold? Thus interpreted, Malebranche's system transforms itself into an ethical scheme of the psychological type, not really deduced from his metaphysics, but having its ultimate credentials in the moral consciousness; and within that genus, it specifically belongs to the class of *intuitive* theories. Mackintosh accuses him of taking for granted all that an ethical philosophy has to establish, viz. 'the reality of moral distinctions, and the power of the moral feelings;' instead of proving these, he is content with asserting them[4]. The criticism is groundless. How is any one to prove 'the

[1] Traité de Morale, II. 9. [2] Ibid. I. 7. [3] Ibid. I. 8.
[4] Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy. Whewell's Ed. p. 180.

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reality of moral distinctions?' If he finds that what are called 'moral distinctions' are resolvable into something non-moral, on which they depend, he can, by disclosing this condition, explain them away and prove them *unreal*, i.e. a mere subjective transformation of what is *other than moral*. But if he finds that he cannot go behind their recognition in consciousness, any more than behind his belief in infinite space and time, how can he go about to prove their reality? A thing cannot be proved unless you have a *better known* to work with; and whatever, when closely scrutinised, stands on the line of *best known*, can have no further voucher for its reality. *If* moral distinctions *are* real, they can occupy no other position than this, relatively to our minds; to see whether they do so is therefore our only resource; and to this Malebranche has resorted. And as to the 'power of the moral feelings,' in few writers, prior to Butler, does it receive more ample and impressive illustration than in Malebranche's treatise.

In what Malebranche discovers, when he retires within to consult his intuitive light, there is a peculiarity which deserves, and has not received, special notice. Other philosophers, as Cudworth, have insisted on 'the eternal and immutable' nature of morality; and, like Dr. Samuel Clarke, have defined that nature, not as something *absolute*, but as consisting of certain unalterable *relations*, not less exact and self-evident than the elementary relations of number; so that in the just and unjust there was an inherent fitness and unfitness of things. But in these and kindred theories the result always was, to establish the single antithesis of Right and Wrong, to put all voluntary conduct under one or other of these two heads, and the same act invariably under the same head. The moral picture of the world, therefore, was all painted in black and white. With Malebranche it is different. The '*order*' of which he reads the intuitive report is a *graduated* order, involving not simply *relations*, but *proportions* of things, a more or less of excellence from zero to perfection. And by this mark, of qualitative worth,

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as opposed to mathematical or logical equivalents, he discriminates ethical from intellectual apprehension. 'Supposing man to be a rational being, we certainly cannot deny him some knowledge of what God thinks, and of the way in which God acts. For, in contemplating the essence of the Divine Wisdom (literally, the substance of the Word), which constitutes my rationality and all intelligence, I can clearly see the relations of magnitude among the ideas which it comprises; and these relations are the same eternal truths which God sees. For God sees as well as I that twice two are four, and that triangles on the same base and between the same parallels are equal. I can also discover, at least dimly, *the relations of perfection* among these ideas; and these relations are the immutable order which God consults when He acts; the order which ought to regulate the respect and love of all intelligences[1].' Whoever inwardly sees this graduated order of perfection, sees as God sees; if he judges by it alone, he is infallible; if he conforms to it, he follows the law which God follows, and has the same love; and to love as he loves is to love in proportion as things are lovable[2]. By thus comprising, within his conception of Moral Order, the idea of a preferential scale of worth ranging over several degrees, Malebranche struck, I believe, an important truth; rather perhaps (as he virtually confesses) 'dimly felt' than made out in distinct detail; for he gives no clear account of what the objects or ideas are which stand upon this scale of relative perfection: sometimes they are beings; sometimes they are thoughts; and again, they are kinds of attainable good; but his general formula, however little worked out, plants ethical theory upon the right track. Unhappily, no successor appreciated it sufficiently to rescue it from its indeterminate state, and carry it forward to fruitful results.

The importance attached by Malebranche to this characteristic principle is evidenced by his setting up our 'Love of the law of Order' as the Sole Virtue, or rather, as the all-

[1] Traité de Morale, I. 6. [2] Ibid. I. 9. 14.

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comprehensive formula under which every particular virtue is embraced. It is as if we were to say, that fidelity to an enlightened conscience was the only or total excellence. Whoever invariably discerns the better and prefers it to the worse, will realise all the virtue demanded from him; and his separate moral qualities, such as justice, bravery, veracity, will be constituted by differences in the impulses that come into play, and in the outward conditions amid which they operate. Malebranche is perhaps too exacting when he demands that no act should be admitted as virtuous which issues from any other principle than love for the law of order: if we are charitable, courageous, patient, under the influence of some particular affection, and without intentional observance of the Divine order, no moral worth (he intimates) attaches to our will. There are, however, two senses in which this assertion may be taken. If it means that a mere impulsive act, put forth by some one affection having for the moment sole possession of us, cannot be virtuous, this is certainly true: the moral character first enters when the better affection is preferred to a competitor also present to the mind; and if that preference takes practical effect, the act is certainly virtuous, though performed simply on comparison of these two rival feelings, and without any generalised love of a larger order coming into play. Perhaps this is all that Malebranche meant. If his words imply that, over and above the right solution of the individual problem, there must be a separate deliberate resolve to preserve the gradations of a universal scale, he makes the same mistake which we should make if we said, that everything was ethically worthless which was not done with a view to being conscientious. It is one thing to follow the higher whenever it comes; another to contemplate the whole scale of gradations, and act with a view to save it from breach. The former suffices to render volition what it ought to be; and it is not needful to suppose that Malebranche demanded more.

By proclaiming allegiance to the law of order to be the

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whole of virtue, Malebranche seems to clash with the Moral Theology of the Catholic Church, which assigns that rank to *Charity* or *Christian love* in the largest sense. By a single mediating thought, however, he ingeniously identifies the two. All virtue is love; but not all love is virtue; to render it so, it must be in proportion to the worth of the objects loved; supreme, for instance, towards God, conditional towards human beings, so as to yield if ever the diviner call requires. And when the affection has adjusted itself to the true and harmonious measure of its claim, it contains in itself the law of order and coalesces with it. We are drawn towards related objects by two kinds of love; (1) by love of union with them, so far as their power over us or affinity with us makes them needful to our happiness; (2) by the love which we call *goodwill* or *benevolence*; this is directed upon their *merit*, and is proportioned to it, without any regard to a dependence of ourselves upon them. The latter, therefore, is purely disinterested; the former, though it be our tie of relation with God and His perfections, is concurrent with self-love, and capable of both justifying and controlling it. For self-love is in itself neither virtue nor vice: it is but the invincible desire of happiness inherent in all conscious natures: its function is indispensable, and is legitimate, so far as the desire is regulated by the real proportions of good, and is supreme towards God, the sum of it all. Short of this condition, it is the great enemy of virtue; for it stands in the way of the other, the benevolent love, and poisons with personal interests the very springs of reverence and affection. In a mind thus preoccupied, the proportions are all distorted of the perfections which claim the moral homage of the heart[1]. So great is our danger of this, that in order to preserve the scale of ethical values unspoiled, it is best to curtail even the legitimate rights of self-love; it is sure to take care of itself, without any nursing by our will: never mind the happiness; leave that to God; and give exclusive heed to the law of order, which is the key to all virtue[2].

[1] Traité de Morale, III. [2] Ibid. I. 19.

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In comprehending all excellence under the love of the Divine order, Malebranche does not decline to specify certain distinct virtues which it comprises. These are not so much parts of it, when it is fully realised, as the voluntary methods of its formation in minds that have to grow into it. They are three: (1) *strength of mind;* (2) *liberty of mind;* (3) *obedience to the perceived order.* The first is the condition of light; the second is the security against error; the third (which is not attained without Divine grace in aid of reason) completes the circuit of the other two, and lets them flash from the reason to the will.

Strength of mind consists in concentration and tenacity of *Attention*, without which true 'ideas' will never visit us and disperse the darkness of sense. Not that it is able of itself to reach them: they are in God, who alone and always gives intellectual light: but He gives it according to general rules; and the condition or 'occasional cause' of His imparting it to us is our earnest *attention*, which is 'a natural prayer' for the illumination of reason. This prayer is chiefly hindered by the too vivid impression of sensible things, the distractions of imagination, the preoccupations of passion. From these we must resolutely shake ourselves free; and meditate only on clear ideas, whether of quantitative or moral relations; seeking our knowledge of man (which is of prime importance) not from outward observation but from inward reflection; and of God (which is supreme), not from experience or tradition, but from contemplating the idea of infinitely perfect being. Truth will flow into the soul thus purified[1].

Liberty of mind consists in suspending assent and arresting the attention of the will, till the light of evidence leaves no option to the understanding. In matters of speculative truth, it is not difficult to exercise this virtue; for there the ideas are distinct and seen through a translucent medium. But, in affairs of practical morals, they are in themselves set apart by finer gradations, and are viewed through an

[1] Traité de Morale, V.

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atmosphere tremulous with feeling or clouded by passion. So that there is strong temptation to let interest decide while reason pauses, and to loose the curb on the impatient will. When this is the case, we are almost sure to fall into error; for we judge, not because we see, but only because we will; the judgment is our own work, and not from the act of God within us; it is a leap in the dark, not a walking in the light. And the more we are pressed upon by social influence, and have the din of chance opinion ever in our ears, the more needful and yet the harder is it to carry every question to the retreats of rational reflection, where alone it can be truly solved. Whoever insists on doing so may lose the suffrages of the hour, but shall gain an unwasting treasure. 'Let a man spend but a single year in intercourse with the world, hearing all that is said, and putting faith in none of it, retiring into himself, moment by moment, to listen whether the truth within holds the same language, and always suspending his assent until the light appears; and him I shall deem more learned than Aristotle, wiser than Socrates, more enlightened than the divine Plato. The facility which he will have in meditating and suspending his assent, I reckon higher than all the virtues of the greatest men of pagan antiquity; for if the soil which he cultivates is not ungrateful, he will have gained by his labour more strength and liberty of mind than one can well imagine. What a difference there is between reason and opinion; between the lord of the inner soul who convinces by evidence, and the men who persuade by instinct, by gesture, by tone, by air and manner; between men at once deceivers and deceived, and the eternal wisdom, the truth itself! Let those who have not reflected on these things pass their censure on me, and begin it by renouncing Reason[1].'

These two, which are the 'Cardinal Virtues,' are the inward preparation for the third, which conducts them to their outward end, viz. living obedience to the Divine law

[1] Traité de Morale, VI. 13.

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of order. The hindrances of passion and opinion are not finally gone, when we have saved our mental vision from their illusions: even when we clearly see the truth, they hang around the will that proceeds to follow it, and by countless unseen threads detain or divert the intended steps. The union with the body, for ever thrusting to the front the importunate craving for immediate ease and pleasure, contests the supreme union with God, which offers only the silent, tranquil, invisible joy of Divine reason and love, and 'deceives, if it be possible, even the elect.' So far as, through the entrance of Sin, we are unfairly matched against this besetting foe, the balance is now redressed by Grace, with the aid of which we are no longer unequal to the fight. The 'means of grace' are the weapons put into our hands; meditation on religious truth, on the Christian view of human life, on Death, and on Immortality, before the face of which the passions dare not appear; prayer and self-denial, and a constant self-remembrance of the relative magnitude of temporal things and eternal. It is true that Death alone can release us into our real and final union with God: but in a large measure we may truly die to the body while yet we live with it; die to its superfluous wants, to its self-incurred ailments, to its inordinate desires, to all that interferes with its purity as a temple of the Holy Spirit, with its dignity as a watchtower of intellectual contemplation: and thus we may attain to some true vision of God, although here we can but 'see in part.' Some there may be who are strong enough to rise into such beginnings of immortal things, while mingling with the full current of human affairs in great cities and mighty States; but for weaker souls it will be safer to break off, as far as possible, from the entanglements of secular interests, and leave a clear space for meditative thought and love to expand and dominate[1]. The need of this is evident when we consider that it is impossible to strengthen the union of the soul with the body without enfeebling its opposite union with God; and the

[1] Traité de Morale, VII-XI.

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great strengthener of that dangerous alliance is the Imagination, which withdraws the intellect from its proper objects, and suborns it to play with phantasms of thought and flashes of speech. Under its fascination we forget the fundamental principle, that 'what happens to the soul *through the body* is *for the body* only,' and must never be assumed by the mind as belonging to its ends. Into this snare none fall more readily than men of natural *wit*. They learn to delight in sparkling surprises of thought, and to seek them at any cost of exaggeration and false combination; they move about through the scene of things with their eyes open to nothing but its oddities and contradictions, and study in mankind chiefly their follies and conceits, till the deeper meanings of life cease to be noticed. At the same time, less vivacious natures feel a strange delight in being startled by the electric lustre of their conversation, and surround them with admirers: their reputation becomes staked upon their power to dazzle and amuse, and the fatal habit becomes confirmed, of turning life into a jest, and degrading its solemn drama into a farce. From these perils Malebranche finds no adequate escape but by absolute self-sacrifice of the passions and imagination: they must be treated as unconditionally contrary to wisdom and virtue: we must avoid the objects which excite them; must test them by the light of Reason, and see how irregular and absurd they are; and invoke Divine assistance to keep us true to the law of the spirit[1].

It will be observed that thus far Malebranche has spoken of *Virtues* only, and not *of Duties;* and of virtues (since he includes 'strength of mind' under them) nearly in the Greek sense of the *best condition* of some aspect or activity of the mind. Not, however, quite in the Greek sense; because though he extends the term to *intellectual* insight, he does not mean to attach it to any best condition except such as has been gained by *voluntary power*. Essentially, however, his treatment of virtue is a treatment of mental perfection, both of the reason and of the will. But now, for the second

[1] Traité de Morale, XII, XIII.

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half of his treatise, he takes up the subject of *Duties*. Like the earlier chapters, it abounds in just remarks on human life, and subtle analysis of character. But, for want of a careful definition at the outset, the conception of Duty is left indeterminate, and is held to no consistent use. He had already said, that it was one of the greatest mistakes of philosophers to confound duty with virtue, whereas we might acquit ourselves of our duty, say of humility or generosity, from mere natural inclination, without any tincture of these virtues; and in that case, being unguided by reason, we should be in fact vicious to excess, while flattering ourselves that we are heroes in virtue. And, on the other hand, in following the inviolable order, we are often called upon to disregard some duty, as when we refuse to succour or indulge our particular friend upon guilty terms[1]. Here, it is obvious, the word 'Duty' is employed of such *external offices* as usually spring from love *rightly adapted* to the relations of life, but which may be imitated by an affection or habit *wrongly adapted* to these relations. As it is only the *rightness* of the affection that constitutes the duty, it is absurd and mischievous to retain the name, when the act has lost its essence and identity.

In this example, the divorce alleged between virtue and duty is from failure of the inner principle. Malebranche dwells also on the inverse case, where, in presence of the inner principle, wicked things are nevertheless done, for want of right apprehension of external relations. A really good man, inspired with the love of the Divine order, may so misconstrue his fellows and the system of the world as, from mistaken zeal, to perpetuate futile and forbidden acts, hurtful to the rights of others, and blinding to his own soul. By appeal to this danger, Malebranche enforces the necessity of studying, besides the inward harmony of the mind, the whole scheme of personal relations of which our life is part; else, however right our virtues, our duties will go wrong. Here then the word 'Duty' is used exclusively of

[1] Traité de Morale, II. 5, 6.

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applied morals, the form of concrete action ethically suitable to the *outward economy* of the world to which we belong. We thus alight upon the usual meaning of the term; and, in conformity with it, the second part of the treatise surveys in succession the three kinds of personal relation in which we stand,—to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves; with the view to define the forms of action which they respectively render obligatory upon us. The general result should be a code of ethical conduct, i.e. a system of executive rules for giving best expression to the virtues deduced in the earlier chapters. From so large an undertaking he excuses himself, on the plea that, the combinations of external conditions being exhaustless, the variations of duty are little short of infinite, and cannot be overtaken by definition. Leaving to each man his own particular problems, he will attempt only a few general laws to cover the ground which is common to all[1].

From this announced intention we expect to be led forth by the author into the outer field of conduct, and taught what we must *do* to carry out the Divine order now here, now there. But, in spite of his promise, and doubtless his purpose, it is rarely so. His strong reflective tendency is too much for him, and is continually pressing him in upon himself and tempting him to dwell rather on what the soul should *be* than on what the will should *do*. Chapter after chapter, we find him deducing the *states of mind*, the judgments and sentiments appropriate to the relation which he is considering, without seriously addressing himself to the problems of overt action which were to engage his skill: in other words, he still lingers upon 'the virtues,' and evades the advance into the *duties*. At last, as if he found it impossible to work out his distinction between them, he relinquishes it with apparent unconsciousness, declares all our duty to be *inward*, consisting of *judgments and stirrings of the soul*, as is fit where the Source of duty is 'a Spirit who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth[2].' He adds indeed,

[1] Traité de Morale, II. 14.

[2] Ibid. II. 15, § 10.

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from time to time, that the duty is incomplete till it has expressed itself in exterior form: his own treatment of it however is applied, not to its possible varieties of form, but to the essence of it in the spirit. Here, therefore, his original conception of duty, as outward offices that might spring from the most dissimilar motives, is turned completely round; and they become interior affections, and retain their identity through all modifications of external manifestation. Malebranche was, in truth, no *casuist;* both from temperament and from his recluse habit, he was deficient in the jurisprudential imagination which can play with the conflicts of motive, and anticipate the combinations of experience; and he gladly escaped from the tangle of circumstances under which the framer of law lives, to spread his ingenuity into the region of great principles and simple affections. The result upon his book is, that the second half does not adequately supplement the first, but, especially in the best portions, repeats and reinforces it; only arranging the matter in a new order, viz. of our personal relations, instead of the moral constitution of the soul. Hence it will suffice if, in order to avoid iteration, we select for notice only two or three characteristic features.

Towards God, as the All-perfect, our duty is summed up in the requirement, to become as true a copy of Him as possible through contemplation of Himself. But each attribute, when seen in relation to us, enjoins on us as dependent beings special affections of the spirit which can have no place in Him. His *Power*, for instance, is no sooner understood by us than it takes from us all our own, and from all creatures around us whatever they seem to have. Hence, every personal pretension vanishes: all admiration which terminates in others becomes idolatry, and all glory and reverence revert to the fountain-head; and the soul assumes the consciousness of *dependent union* with Him. Securely to preserve this, it is well even to turn aside altogether from all created things that can intercept the supreme union; especially to decline the witcheries of

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pleasure, which, even at the best, bring us into captivity to finite objects. So, when we know that God's *Wisdom* is our only light of thought, our duties of judgment and decision assume the aspect of a reference to Him: the fact that an effort of attention in us is the occasion of His gift, no longer tempts us to credit ourselves with it; so that a pure humility becomes as natural as it is right; yet not unbalanced by a firm courage; for the judgment of others, so far as it is negatived by Reason, becomes nought to us, just like our own; and we carry a perpetual appeal from the opinion of men to the verdict of God. Again, in reflecting upon the *Love* of God, we know that it can fix only on all that is lovable, that is, on Himself, the absolute and total good; and that from this primal spring all human love is but a partial outflow, similarly directed upon good and good alone (though often mistaken as to where it lies), and leading upwards to the Sum of all. If in Him and us it is but *one* love, it must have the same proportions in both, and give itself to objects according to their true scale of good. The order of the Divine perfection, the order of the eternal law, we, like God, must love more than any part that it contains. Hence, we must fix our hearts, not on happiness, which exists to be the crown and reward of goodness, but on perfection, which is its condition, and without approaching which it is a delusion and a snare. The duty imposed by God's love is therefore conformity with His wisdom, and willing obedience to His law; not any limited and special service, but self-identification with the one comprehensive virtue.

Towards our neighbours, as co-members with us of a social organism, our duties are determined by the Divine purpose of our common life. To this we must give our heart and will; and to the parts which it includes, in proportion to their excellence. Society exists for a twofold end, (1) temporal good; (2) spiritual good; and has its scheme of provisions for attaining both; the State for the one, the Church for the other. The former is rendered

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necessary by the union in our nature of the soul with the body, to the consequences of which its functions and its duration are limited. The latter addresses itself to the soul alone, treats it as enrolled in an eternal society, and prepares it for that diviner commonwealth. In the subsidiary and transient nature of the first kind of good, compared with the unlimited character of the second, we see the order of duty plainly prescribed: for others, as well as for ourselves, we must be chiefly intent on the spiritual well-being which no death can touch, and on its known conditions,—union with God,—conformity with Christ,—and affections true to the gradations of human excellence. All intercourse, therefore, should tend to mutual sanctification, and should keep the inward eye fixed on real perfection; though for this end we have to shun the precincts of Courts and the resorts of ambition, where the outer brilliancy quenches solemn thought and tender memories. Subject to this general rule of preference for spiritual good, many modifications of duty arise from personal relations, of family and civic life, of authority, equality, or dependence, of friendship or enmity. In commenting on these, Malebranche shows a strange mixture of considerate piety, and almost cynical criticism of character. When he pleads for the 'honour due to all men,' he urges with persuasive force, that the meanest have from God the full human capacity, though unopened yet; that the poor were the favourites and first followers of Christ; that the sinner is but the sheep that has gone astray, and may yet be found of the Good Shepherd; and that, in those who please us not, the inward intent is hid, and is perhaps better than we dream; and that, even in the heart of our enemy, there may be a secret way of reconciliation, if we close it by no wrong of anger or contempt. But when he treats of our relation to *equals*, there is a curious leaven of *policy* mingled with his wisdom. We are to take the lowest place, which, as he truly says, we may sincerely do, because we must have a more intimate knowledge of our own demerits than of any other man's. But we

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are to take pains to satisfy others that they hold the place in our esteem which they suppose themselves to deserve; we are to make ourselves agreeable by an air of modesty and respect, not negligent, not stately, not haughty. We are not to expect too much; remembering that '*there are no such things as disinterested friends*;' for the best have only this distinction,—that they expect their reward from God, instead of from us. May we not indulge a smile at the heterogeneous union in these counsels of moral insight, and French politesse, and mercenary religion?

If, in treating of 'duty towards ourselves,' Malebranche falls into some confusion and vacillation, it is only the necessary consequence of trying to work out a self-contradictory conception. It takes two persons to make a duty; for it is what I owe *to another*, and is not constituted by the interior egoistic relations of a single subject. No doubt, it makes a great difference to myself whether I do this or that; but a difference which lies within the scope of *Prudence*, and involves no consequences but those of *error*. If I am a sot instead of a philosopher, you may call me a fool; but the moment you say I am *responsible and must answer for it*, you assume the presence (Society aside) of an authoritative Law; that is, of a higher personality that has *rights* over me; and such assumption lurks in every recognition by the conscience of a higher and lower object of the will. Whatever therefore, in action purely egoistic, may put on the aspect of something more than prudence, is duty, not towards ourselves, but towards God, the inspirer of conscience. If once you push the idea of Duty down to the territory of Prudence, it is caught as in a trap, and you can never get it out again alive; its captor, finding it delivered into his hands, invades and annexes all its provinces; and proclaims a universal empire of eudæmonist or hedonistic rule. Malebranche, having taken the fatal step, struggles hard, but in vain, to evade its inevitable drift. Self-love, that is, the quest of happiness, is the invincible and unceasing necessity of our nature, which we are free to direct

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on this line or that, but not to suspend or abate. It is our universal motive, to the best choice as to the worst; our motive for conforming to the Law of Divine order, for loving God and seeking union with Him as the Supreme Good. If we seek Perfection, it is because it merits happiness, and will be hereafter crowned by it. But for this assurance, we should make a different choice. 'In this life, the soul may be happy that is all in disorder; the exercise of virtue is hard and painful, and must be so, to test our faith and enable us to gain genuine merit. But it is not always to be so, and cannot be. There is no God unless the soul is immortal; and a time is coming when the face of things shall change; for an unjust God is a phantom God. All this the mind clearly sees; and what inference must be drawn by its enlightened self-love, its invincible and insatiable desire of happiness?—that, for solid happiness, it must submit itself wholly to the Divine will [1].'

So far, we seem to listen to a consistent doctrine of self-love as the animating power, not of ethics only, but of religion; and, except that it dwells more on the rewarding than on the penal side of the Divine Sovereignty, we could fancy it was Hobbes himself clenching his moral law with the proclamation, 'There is no kicking against the pricks [2].' Yet, this is not what Malebranche meant; and, as if to force himself away from such a tendency, he has no sooner said that the desire of happiness must be our *motive* for love and obedience to God, than he adds that nevertheless the happiness must not be our *end*, and that we must prefer the Divine law to all things [3]. This is as much as to say, that what we are necessarily desiring we are not to aim at. The only sense that I can devise for such a proposition is that, though we desire the object, we are to take no steps to get it; and this is not the author's meaning; for the desire is just what is to put us on the obedience and love which gain the happiness. The distinction between the 'motive' and

[1] Traité de Morale, XXVII. 4. [2] De Cive. § III. xv. 7.
[3] Traité de Morale, XXVII. 5.

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the 'end' is here altogether a verbal illusion. There are but two varieties of motive (i. e. of influences tending to volition); a blind impulse from behind, and a conceived good before us. The former is a mere pressure of feeling, like that which finds vent in natural language and gesture, or in bursts of anger, or other instinctive animal action. The latter differs from this in having a *purpose* or *preconceived end*, the attraction of which sets us on finding and using the means for its attainment. It is with this latter kind alone that Malebranche's proposition has to do; and here the motive actually *is* the end in view, and cannot be otherwise defined. His doctrine, therefore, leaves no relation possible between our love of God and of his law on the one hand, and our happiness on the other, than that of means to an end; and his exhortations to us to prefer perfection to happiness, and to love God and the law of eternal order on their own account, are unsusceptible of being rationally carried into effect. In truth, his cynical rejection of disinterested friendship must be extended to all forms of love, whether its object be human or Divine. As no one can set up an affection for a purpose, or work his self-love into self-forgetfulness, Malebranche could not face the absurdity of this conclusion: his better feelings required him to keep it out of sight: he demands an enthusiasm which his avowed principle would render impossible: he oscillates between the psychological supremacy of self, and the ontological supremacy of God. The reader, if clear-minded, cannot go with him in both directions; but, if also just, will surely own, that it is his logic that is superficial his piety that is profound.

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CHAPTER III.

SPINOZA.

The intimate dependence of philosophical development on theological impulse is illustrated in each of the successive writers of the Immanental school. They all owed the first excitement of their speculative genius to some religious training. Descartes was a scholar of the Jesuits; Geulinx, a convert to the Protestantism of the Low Countries; Malebranche, a Priest of the Oratory; Spinoza, a pupil of the Rabbis. In their several characters they not inexactly represent the adroit intellectual diplomatist, the sad and severe Calvinist, the gentle and meditative mystic, the passionless rationalist. The courtly temper and social position of Descartes, his skill in dialectic fence, his flexibility in external compliance with the professions of his age, his susceptible vigilance over his own reputation, succeeded in neutralising the suspicions and resistance awakened by his doctrines among the guardians of the Church, and would perhaps have sufficed to insinuate into equally tranquil circulation even the ulterior development of the system which he left to his successors. But the poor Jew of Amsterdam, who is now to claim our attention, had neither outward station nor dexterous arts with which to cover the tendency of his speculations: though not entirely free from the circumspect speech of his nation and his age, he uses it so baldly and transparently, that it answers no purpose: the simple mind with its real meaning everywhere shines through; and the genuine love of truth, coldly dominating over a still and unambitious nature, gives an unshrinking thoroughness to the structure of his philosophy. Hence, an opposition

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which had but partially resisted the earlier movement of thought in this direction, and which the affectionate piety of Malebranche disarmed, broke with full force upon the system of Spinoza; and, by singling it out for attack, concealed from view the near relation in which it stands to its antecedents of less obnoxious name.

§ 1. *Authorities for his Biography.*

In a house on the Veerkay at the Hague was a back room of the second étage in which Spinoza had lived for a time, cared for by a certain widow. The same room was occupied, some twenty years later, by a worthy and inquisitive Lutheran clergyman, Jean Coler, whom the *genius loci* inspired with a kindly and sympathetic curiosity respecting the personality and habits of Spinoza, notwithstanding a strong theological aversion to his opinions. To his painstaking enquiries, which did not scorn the minutest details of gossip, we owe the only authentic and connected early biography of Spinoza. Though not published till 1706 (twenty-nine years after the philosopher's death), it has needed little correction from subsequent researches, though supplemented by some additional facts, either contributed by annotators, or ascertained by the discovery of new materials. Of the former class the chief additions are due to a manuscript 'Vie de Spinoza,' published in 1719 by Henri de Sauzet of Amsterdam, in the tenth volume of his periodical 'Nouvelles Littéraires,' and simultaneously reproduced from the same types along with an appended 'Traité des trois Imposteurs' (Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes, Spinoza), under the enlarged title 'La Vie et l'Esprit de Mr. Benoît de Spinosa.' Of this compound book, the two parts are written in completely opposite interests; the Treatise by a vehement opponent, the Life by an admiring disciple, declared in the preface to be Lucas, a physician at the Hague. The contributions from this source were interwoven with Coler's text in a book entitled

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'Réfutations des Erreurs de Benoît de Spinosa, par M. de Fénelon, Archevêque de Cambray, par le P. Lami, Bénédictin, et par M. le Comte de Boulainvilliers' (Bruxelles, 1731):—a book issued, notwithstanding its title, in the interest of Spinozism, and known to have been edited by the Abbé Lenglet Du-Fresnoy. The interpolations thus introduced into Coler's biography are again separated from it and thrown into foot-notes by Paulus in his edition of Spinoza's works (1802–3), with some further citations from another MS. copy of Lucas's 'Life.' A notice prefixed, that only seventy copies were printed, accounts for the rapid disappearance of this Sauzet publication, except in a few manuscript survivals; and its union with a brochure of contrary tendency explains the strange mixture of conflicting elements in Lenglet's edition. The correspondence of Spinoza, as it appeared in the *Opera Posthuma* of 1677, and some scattered notices of him by contemporaries, especially Leibniz, complete the sources on which, till 1852, we exclusively depended for our conception of Spinoza's history and characteristics.

In that year, however, Professor Edouard Boehmer of Halle published some outlines (*lineamenta*) which he had found in manuscript a few months before at a learned bookseller's, Friedrich Muller's, of Amsterdam, of an early and unpublished treatise of Spinoza, 'On God, and Man and his Wellbeing:' the manuscript was appended to a copy of Coler's life (both in Dutch). Shortly after, Muller found a Dutch copy of the entire treatise, written apparently in the middle of the last century, annexed to a Dutch translation of Spinoza's abstract of Descartes' 'Principia;' and, with some further search, alighted upon a store of autograph letters between the philosopher and his friends, which had lurked unnoticed in a Baptist Orphanage at Amsterdam. All these, together with a Treatise on the Rainbow, anonymously published, and supposed to have been destroyed by Spinoza, Muller gave to the world in his *Supplementum ad B. de Spinoza Opera*, under the editorial care of Dr. J. van Vloten, who

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supplied a Latin translation of the Dutch text. A second Dutch manuscript of the 'Short Treatise on God,' &c. written probably in the author's lifetime, was discovered and published by Muller in 1869; and the editor, Professor Schaarschmidt of Bonn, who had already put forth an edition of the first-known manuscript, found the second so superior that he made it the basis of an excellent German translation (2nd edition, 1874). These new sources have considerably deepened and widened our knowledge of Spinoza; the letters, of his life; the treatise, of the genesis of his philosophy; and have largely contributed to the revived interest, during the present generation, in his personality and his system of thought.

§ 2. *Life and Personality*[1].

Baruch Spinoza was born November 24, 1632, in a family of (probably) Spanish Jews, who about twenty-five years before had escaped in a Portuguese craft to the revolted provinces, and settled in Amsterdam. In this city, which they called their New Jerusalem, the Israelitish fugitives from Portugal alone needed a synagogue for four hundred members; and though there was as yet no State charter of religious liberty, and the clergy would have given no rights to the intruders, the magistrates were sufficiently free from intolerant prejudice to welcome the settlement of an orderly people, who brought with them large capital, commercial enterprise, and not a little of the best culture of the age. They were accordingly permitted to raise their synagogue and school, by a self-imposed percentage on their trade returns, and to retain their national usages unmolested. Spinoza's home was not one of the three hundred great

[1] The references in this and the remaining sections on Spinoza are to the recent admirable edition, by J. Van Vloten and J. P. N. Land, Benedicti de Spinoza Opera, quotquæ reperta sunt. 2 Voll. Hagæ Com. 1883. For Coler's Life, however, which the Editors have not reproduced, reference is made to Paulus's edition, in two Vols. 1802–3.

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mansions by which the refugees from the peninsula are said to have adorned the city; but the house of a moderate shopkeeper, who needed economy to provide a competent education for his two daughters and son. Of these daughters, one (Rebecca) remained single; the other (Miriam Karkeris) was the mother of Daniel, who inherited some of the few articles of property left by his uncle. Of the interior relations of this home nothing is known; and of the father only one thing is told, to show how he trained his son to estimate people by their practical honesty, and not by their sanctimonious pretensions. The boy was sent, when only ten years old, to receive payment of a debt due from a neighbouring old woman. The child, finding her reading her Bible, was ordered to be quiet till her pious exercises were over. While counting out the money at last, she kept praising his father for his faithfulness to the Mosaic Law, and prayed heaven that the child might in due time be as good a man. This style of remark was not to the boy's taste; and instead of letting her pour the coins into his bag on her own reckoning, he insisted on counting them himself; and found that, through a slit in the table, two ducats had been dropped into a till below. Recovering these, he took back the money and the story to his father, from whose contempt for the old hypocrite and praise of himself his love of truth and uprightness were strongly confirmed[1].

Of Baruch's childhood no other tale is told. Not far from his home there had been established an extensive Jewish school, ranging, in its seven classes, through the whole course of traditional education, from the rudiments of Hebrew grammar to the most subtle wordplay of the Rabbinists and the speculations of the mystic interpreters; and here no doubt it was that he learned whatever his early years acquired from others' teaching. The head of the school, as of the Synagogue, Saul Levi Morteira, was but a commonplace person, not unfurnished with the ordinary learning of a Rabbi, but without intellectual penetration or

[1] B. de Spin. Opera, Paulus, II. pp. 629, 630, note.

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strength of character, a slave of decorum and a master of flattery, with whom the art of life lay chiefly in the evasion of difficulties. The quick and thirsty understanding of the boy carried him rapidly through the studies in which such guidance suffices; and by the time he was fifteen, the lessons in the Hebrew Scriptures suggested to him questions on which Morteira gave him no satisfaction, and which, though modestly pressed no further, fermented in his mind and kept him eager for relief from other sources. They impelled him to a closer private reading of the Biblical literature, and then of the pertinent parts of the Talmud: the way cleared as he went along: at twenty years of age his suspense was over, his difficulties had dispersed, but had carried away with them his traditional faith, and left him to seek his theory of the world from some more enduring source than Moses.

It was probably at this crisis of his inner life, between 1650 and 1654, that he sought help from the more speculative Jewish literature, and gained what acquaintance his writings indicate (it is by no means great) with Ibn-Ezra, Maimonides, and Chasdaï Kreskas. For, so long as he could find sympathy with his rationalising tendency, and hope of a satisfying religious philosophy, among the schools of his own people, he would naturally try whether there was shelter for him there; but when once he had broken away from the house of his fathers, and applied himself to overtake the Gentile culture, it is not likely that he would turn back to the sources which had failed him. No doubt, when the writings of these learned Israelites had gained a place in his memory, there would be nothing to prevent him from referring to them, as to other books, for anything that was apposite to the subject on which he was engaged; but his later citations from them, or reproduction of their thoughts, have the character of relics of a past knowledge, much more than of any fresh and present dependence. His substantive study of them belongs, I believe, to the latter part of his life 'under the covenant.' His essential

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disappointment with them left his mind open and thirsting for sources of truth in other and foreign fields: the inward loss of Judaism was an inward attraction towards Gentilism; and among the new acquaintances which he formed beyond the circle of his nation, he fell in with two types of character, both of which, in spite of their contrariety, drew him by a powerful sympathy. Each of these requires a few words.

The cruel uncertainty of Jewish life in Christian lands had established the usage in every family of training each youth to some profitable skill or industry; and Baruch Spinoza had learnt from some optician the art, rendered every year more important by the recent invention and constant improvement of the telescope, of grinding and polishing lenses. It was probably in the intercourses of this business that he came to know a small tradesman of Amsterdam, afterwards one of his confidential correspondents, viz. Jarigh Jelles, who, becoming prosperous, bore the cost of his first publication; and, surviving the philosopher, wrote in Dutch for his posthumous works the preface which either Glasemaker or Ludwig Meyer translated into Latin. This man was an Anabaptist or Mennonite, and probably of that small section whose members, from their union in Collegia, or fraternal clubs without any clerical office, were called *Collegiants*. Proscribed by the proscribed Remonstrants, these sectaries maintained themselves in Holland till the close of the last century, with a quiet patience like that of the Quakers in our own country, and proceeding indeed from very similar principles. For they so held to the perpetuity of the Divine Spirit in man as to insist upon dogmatic freedom: they refused to take an oath or to serve in war, and had been released from these obligations by a special law (of 1578): they allowed any brother, spiritually moved, to speak in their assembly; and, with the exception of baptism by immersion, retained no ritual element in their Christianity. They were rigorous in guarding the moral purity of their community, and remarkable for their frugality, veracity, and industry; and with their simplicity

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and austerity of habit combined in an unusual degree an openness to knowledge and love of scientific truth. Such were apparently the first kind of Christians whom the alienated Jew learned to know; and it is easy to understand how congenial to him would be their intellectual and spiritual freedom, their inwardness of religion, their peaceable disposition, and their simplicity of life. We may fairly presume that his predilection for these people implied at first an approval of their characteristic opinions, speculative as well as ethical, though it survived several subsequent divergencies; and as they were Arminians, living in protest against the first principles of the Calvinistic theology, his intimacy with them would most naturally be formed within the time when he still adhered to the doctrine of Free-will. It also deserves to be remembered that he derived his first impressions of Christianity from these brethren of the free spirit, whose reverence for Christ was founded on His moral union with God and revelation of the perfect human life; for, if Spinoza early caught up the essence of this estimate, we need the less charge him with insincere accommodation, when he says that 'Christ communed with God, mind with mind; but this spiritual closeness is unique[1];' and that to Christ alone did God give revelations, not conformed to his subjective opinions, but immediately to the mind; that is, that Christ really understood the things revealed, which, being universal, involved only conceptions everywhere true[2]. Such language doubtless requires to be translated from the vernacular into the Spinozistic symbolism, before it yields its real meaning; but there is a satisfaction in believing that, from the aspect under which the Christian characteristics first presented themselves to him, it may have had a true meaning for himself, and not have been a mere empty play upon his reader's thought. Throughout his life these Collegiants seem to have formed the social

[1] Tract Theol.-Pol. cap. i. Vol. I. 383.
[2] Ibid. cap. iv. Vol. I. 427.

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circle nearest to his feeling; the batch of letters recently discovered were in their custody; for the Baptist orphanage in which it was preserved had belonged to them. And the interest they felt in his philosophy was evinced by opposition as well as by discipleship; for one of their brotherhood, John Bredenburg, a weaver of Rotterdam, reported to be a Socinian, published an answer to the treatise just quoted; supplying a 'geometrical' disproof of its alleged fundamental principle, viz. that Nature and God are identical[1].

The second type of new friend gained by the young Baruch was very different. From his Hebrew studies he had turned to the acquisition of languages in more general use. From the Spanish of his father's house to Italian, and from the Dutch of his city streets to German, the extension was not very difficult; but he continually felt the need of Latin scholarship, without which literary intercourse with foreigners was impossible, and half of every library was closed to him. Timely help was offered him for this attainment by a scholarly physician and wit, Franz van den Ende, on condition of his residing in the house, and giving assistance in a school which was more profitable to the physician than his practice. This arrangement took effect for probably two years, ending in 1655; and brought him into an atmosphere unlike that of any prior experience. Van den Ende was devoted to physical science, and developed the taste for it in his assistant. He was moreover a dashing and reckless 'freethinker,' apparently without any remnant of religious belief, and never tired of satirising the superstitions of mankind. So little was his caustic humour restrained by either personal prudence or tenderness for others' feeling, that he soon drew upon himself the anger of the families who sent him pupils, and was obliged to quit not the city only, but the United Provinces.

[1] Joh. Bredenburgii enervatio tractatus theologico-politici; una cum Demonstratione Geometrico ordine disposita Naturam non esse Deum. Cujus effati contrario prædictus Tractatus unice innititur. Roterodami, 1675.

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Withdrawing himself to France, he could not rest long without engaging in a conspiracy to raise an insurrection and land Dutch troops in Normandy: the plot was detected, the leaders were beheaded, and Van den Ende ignominiously hanged.

The influence of a man of this strong and coarse fibre could hardly fail to be considerable on a susceptible youth with undetermined convictions. It would inevitably harden his sceptical rationalism: it enlarged his scientific knowledge, and probably fixed him in his naturalistic mode of thinking; and perhaps infused into his temper the tincture of compassionate contempt which betrays itself in his estimate of average men. The story of his often receiving his lessons from the clever daughter of the house instead of from her father, and so becoming entangled in a romantic attachment to her, which the bribe of a pearl necklace tempted her to relinquish in favour of a richer suitor, has been so gracefully turned to account by the art of Berthold Auerbach [1], as to give a charm to his life for thousands who have no conception of his philosophy. But the recent discovery of the young lady's (Clara Maria) register of marriage to the purse-proud rival (Kerckrinck), with the entry of her age, cruelly discredits this tradition, by showing that Spinoza left the house before she was twelve years old[2]. And so vanishes the only indication that he ever interrupted an abstract speculation by any intruding vision of womankind.

Once withdrawn from his father's house by this school engagement, he would naturally fall away from Jewish usages which had no longer any hold upon his conscience: his attendance at the synagogue became rare, and his reticence and respect for what was due to others did not protect him from suspicion. Morteira probably surmised how matters stood, but being fond of the youth,—perhaps afraid of him,—and averse to scandals, thought it wisest 'quieta

[1] Spinoza, ein Denkerleben. Mannheim, 1854.
[2] Van Vloten, Supplementum, p. 290, note.

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non movere.' Two young prigs, however, class-fellows with him under the Rabbi, managed, by affecting doubts of their own, to worm out of him some avowals of opinion inconsistent with scriptural conceptions of God and spiritual beings; and, by artful use of these confidences, succeeded in creating a religious panic which the rabbinate could not disregard. He was summoned before the synagogue court; and, naturally enough, when he was charged with contempt of the law, his professions of innocence, which could only be very general, availed little against the definite statements of his accusers, that he ridiculed the Jews as ignorant alike of physics and of theology; that he represented Moses as an adroit manager of a people requiring to be deceived; and said that none knew less of God than the race which boasted of being peculiarly His. In spite of these charges, perhaps in consequence of their obvious spitefulness, the judges visited him at first with only the lesser anathema, which allowed of retractation within thirty days[1]. And even this, it is probable, would not have been passed, had not the mildest and most enlightened member of the court, Manasseh ben Israel, been absent in England. During the month of suspense, personal influence was vainly tried to extort a pledge of silence from Baruch; and a pension of 1,000 gulden was promised to him, without any condition of recantation, if he would only keep his opinions to himself. When it was found that nothing would induce him to sell the truth and turn his future into an hypocrisy, the exasperation against him became extreme, and so wrought upon an orthodox fanatic, that he lay in wait for the heretic as he issued from some public place (synagogue or theatre), and struck an assassin's blow at him. It was evaded, and only pierced his coat. Warned by this danger, Spinoza withdrew from Amsterdam, and took refuge with one of his Collegiant friends, who lived in a village on the road to Oudekerk.

[1] See Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, B. X. p. 176, who remedies the confusion of the earlier accounts by suggesting the order of incidents given in the text.

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In his absence, on July 27, 1656, the great ban of excommunication was launched against him, which finally cut him off from Israel. This curious specimen of ecclesiastical wrath deserves to be quoted. 'With the judgment of the angels and saints we anathematise, separate, curse, and execrate Baruch d'Espinoza, with concurrence of the Church court, and the whole of our sacred community, in presence of the sacred books and their 630 precepts, with the anathema wherewith Joshua anathematised Jericho, with the curse wherewith Elisha cursed the boys, and with all the curses written in the book of the Law. Cursed may he be by day and by night, cursed in sleeping and waking, cursed in going out and coming in. May the Lord never pardon him; may He make His fury and anger burn against the man; may He lay upon him all the curses written in the book of the Law, and destroy his name under heaven; and may the Lord separate him for evil from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of heaven (*firmamenti*) in the book of the Law. And you who adhere to the Lord your God, may it be well with you; taking heed that no one may speak with him by word of mouth or by writing; no one is to do him any kindness, no one to stand under the same roof with him, or to be within four ells of him; no one to read any document or writing of his[1].'

To this denunciation Spinoza is said to have sent in a written reply in his own defence. But it no longer exists, except so far as parts of it are probably embodied in his Theologico-political Treatise. He took his ostracism imperturbably, observing that it only placed him in the very position which he should voluntarily have assumed, and detached him not so much from privileges as from bonds. His enemies are said to have followed up their ecclesiastical proscription by an application for his perpetual civic banishment. This they certainly did not procure; but if the magistrates, as the tradition says, consulted the city clergy on the charge against him, it may be true that for a few

[1] Van Vloten, Suppl. 291–293.

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months, till the excitement of the synagogue had subsided, they imposed upon him the exile which he had already chosen. His transference from the Jewish to the Gentile world he marked by assuming the name Benedict in place of Baruch.

Throughout his intercourse with the 'uncovenanted' world, Spinoza had lived in a Cartesian atmosphere. His Collegiant friends were imbued with the metaphysics, Van den Ende with the physics, of that school; and the noise of the Utrecht controversy filled the public ear. The characteristic formulas and general drift of the philosophy in vogue must have been favourably known to him, and awakened the curiosity of so keen a mind. It may well have been this very curiosity which made him lament his want of Latin, for in that language both the 'Meditations' and the 'Principia' were written; and it does not appear that the French translations would have served him any better. His regular study of Descartes may therefore be reasonably assigned to the latter part of his residence in Van den Ende's house, and the years immediately following (say 1654–1658). There can be no doubt that he was completely captivated, and felt the relief of an organising principle at work among the broken and crossing lights of his thought. I do not say that, prior to his introduction to Descartes, he had only negatived his original beliefs, and was without any speculative conception of the system of things. In the first part of his 'Short Treatise on God,' &c. there are two dialogues artificially interwoven, which are apparently products of his præ-Cartesian time; and in these we find already, in the baldest form, that identification of Nature and God which was to emerge as the result of his finished philosophy. But here it is arbitrarily forestalled and crudely presented, as if picked up by sympathy with some writer who rendered the doctrine attractive; and, both in its substance and in its form, is like a flat imitation of Giordano Bruno. The thought is loose and vague, the floating suggestions of a mind unsystematised, altogether different from the rigorous and strongly linked order, whereby, from the moment of

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his acquaintance with Descartes, he strove to assimilate philosophy to geometry. As a matter of *speculative feeling*, he probably preoccupied the pantheistic terminus which was the logical goal of Cartesianism; but the *way to it*, the starting-point from which to set out, the lines within which he must keep, and the caution required at each critical turn, he learned directly or indirectly from Descartes. To no predecessor did he owe any obligation which detracts from his just reputation as an independent thinker; but to say with Avenarius that he was 'never a Cartesian[1],' seems to me an assertion of his originality at once paradoxical and superfluous.

During his residence in his friend's country house, a number of young men interested in the new philosophy gathered around him, and acquired the habit of referring their intellectual difficulties to him, and afterwards discussing them together with the light of his replies. To this little club of Cartesians, which still maintained itself when he had removed to a distance, belonged especially Simon van Vries, Ludwig Meyer, and John Bresser, medical students, who continued through life in intimate relations with him. With these three we meet in after years, among the correspondents and friends of Spinoza: with Bresser indeed, engrossed in professional practice, the intimacy on the speculative side seems to have slackened, not without good-humoured remonstrance and attempt to revive it on the part of the master; who, in his turn, gives him proof of his confidence by consulting him about an attack of tertian ague, and sending to him for some 'conserve of red roses' which he had prescribed for it[2]. Meyer attended the philosopher's last hours, and edited his posthumous volume. Van Vries, who apparently acted as secretary of the club,—a youth of good fortune and fine promise,—foreseeing his

[1] Ueber die beiden ersten Phasen des Spinozischen Pantheismus, und das Verhältniss der zweiten zur dritten Phase. Von Richard Avenarius. Leipz. 1868, § 6, pp. 17–19.

[2] Epp. XXVIII, XXXVII.

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early death, and having no one dependent on him, wished to make Spinoza his heir; but was persuaded by him not to divert the estate from a younger brother, and to be content with subjecting it to a small rent-charge by way of life-pension; which the philosopher himself made smaller by reducing it from 500 to 300 florins per annum[1]. An affection at once so disinterested and so considerate could subsist only between two noble natures.

The study and discussion of Descartes was no passive process of absorption and interpretation of foreign ideas: careful abstracts were made, which brought the several parts of the scheme of doctrine into their logical relations, and gradually revealed its weaker junctures; and when Spinoza came, as he evidently did, to give *lessons* on it to learners, he could not but detect every misfit with his own prior assumptions. Hence, while he expounded the system he also modified it, and reached the first phase of his own doctrine, namely that which finds expression in the 'Short Treatise on God,' &c. (exclusive of the dialogues). The most marked deviations from Cartesianism are two; the adoption of the theory of determinism; and the denial of any *possible* beyond the *actual*, or, in other words, the unconditional identification of God with Nature. Outside these exceptions, there is a large reproduction of Descartes, —his *à priori* proofs of the existence of God from the Idea of God; the duality of substance; the synchronism of body and mind; the relation between understanding and will; the immortality of the soul; and, above all, a psychology of 'the passions,' the list of which (excepting two omissions) is, as Sigwart says, almost a servile copy[2]. This first phase

[1] Coler, ap. Paulus, II. p. 623.

[2] I take from Sigwart (Spinoza's Neuentdeckter Tractat, p. 97), the following comparison of the two lists:—

Cartesius de Passionibus.			*Spinoza de Deo, Homine, &c.*		
II.	69–148.	Admiratio.	II. c. 3 & 4.		Admiratio.
„	„	Amor.	„	5.	Amor.
„	„	Odium.	„	6.	Odium (Aversio).
„	„	Cupiditas.	„	7.	Cupiditas.

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of systematised doctrine must have been constituted between 1658 and 1661; and as he was then about to leave the neighbourhood of Amsterdam, it is not unlikely that he reduced it to written form, and placed the 'Short Treatise' in the hands of his disciples, as a manual for reference when they could no longer personally consult him. The annotations which appear in almost every page are, with the exception of one to the Preface of Part II, almost certainly not his: they are probably the comments of the students who applied themselves to the treatise, and heard the explanations transmitted by him in reply to their enquiries.

Cartesius de Passionibus.		*Spinoza de Deo, Homine, &c.*	
II.	69–148. Lætitia.	II.	c. 7. Lætitia.
,,	,, Mæror.	,,	,, Tristitia.
III.	149–152. Existimatio et Despectus.	,,	8. Existimatio et Contemptus.
,,	153–156. Generositas et Humilitas.	,,	,, Generositas, Humilitas.
,,	157–161. Superbia et Humilitas vitiosa.	,,	,, Superbia, Abjectio.
,,	162–164. Veneratio et Dedignatio.		
,,	165. Spes et Metus.	,,	9. Spes et Metus.
,,	166. Securitas et Desperatio.	,,	,, Securitas, Desperatio.
,,	167–169. Zelotypia.		
,,	170. Animi Fluctuatio.	,,	,, Animi Fluctuatio.
,,	171. Animositas et Audacia.	,,	,, Intrepiditas et Audacia.
,,	172. Æmulatio.	,,	,, Æmulatio.
,,	174–176. Pusillanimitas et Consternatio.	,,	,, Pusillanimitas et Consternatio.
		,,	,, Invidia (Boehmer, Zelotypia, Belgzugt).
,,	177. Conscientiæ Morsus.	,,	10. Conscientiæ Morsus.
,,	178–181. Irrisio et Jocus.	,,	11. Irrisio et Jocus.
,,	182–184. Invidia.	,,	,, Invidia.
,,	186–189. Commiseratio.	,,	14. Commiseratio.
,,	190. Acquiescentia in se ipso.		
,,	191. Pœnitentia.	,,	,, Pœnitentia.
,,	192. Favor.	,,	13. Favor.
,,	193–194. Gratitudo et Ingratitudo.	,,	,, Gratitudo et Ingratitudo.
,,	195–203. Indignatio et Ira.	,,	,, Ira, Indignatio.
,,	204–206. Gloria et Pudor.	,,	12. Honor et Pudor.
,,	207. Impudentia.	,,	,, Impudentia.

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In 1661 he quitted for good the neighbourhood of his native place, and took up his abode at Rhijnsburg, near Leyden, where there was so large a colony of Collegiants that the sect was familiarly known by the name of Rhijnsburger. Here he was visited, during that summer, by a foreigner whose name figures most largely in his correspondence; Oldenburg, the first Secretary of our Royal Society, an industrious common-place German, who made it his business to maintain communication, on behalf of his constituents, with the leading men of Science throughout Europe. Devoted to Baconian rules of observation and experiment, he sought Spinoza for his optical knowledge and skill, as much as for his intellectual repute; and the correspondence which followed is a curious cross-fight between two minds that cannot meet; the enthusiasm of the one expending itself on nitre and the air-pump, that of the other in daring metaphysics that take away the Secretary's breath. By sending him Robert Boyle's treatises as they appeared, and inviting his criticism on these and other similar publications, Oldenburg almost compelled Spinoza's attention to physics and chemistry; and at no later time do these subjects come so much to the front in his own letters or those of his young disciples at Amsterdam. For the first time, it is probable, he now took the measure of Descartes, not only by his own reflections, but by confronting him directly with the opposite methods of Bacon and Hobbes. The reply to Oldenburg's first letter, and his work *De Intellectus Emendatione*, on which he was now engaged[1], both of them indicate the recent reading of Bacon. And a book which appeared in 1663, reproducing Hobbes's theory of the State, was so generally ascribed to Spinoza's school as to imply that the prevalence of that doctrine among them was already matter of notoriety; though, in point of fact, the treatise in question, if Leibniz is not mistaken, is the production of Van den Hoof[2]. In any

[1] Ep. XI. Apr. 3, 1663.

[2] See Leibn. Theodicée, § 375. The title of the treatise in question

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case it is pretty certain that by this time Spinoza himself had elaborated the doctrine of Civil Society, expounded in Chaps. XVI. XVII. of his Theologico-political Treatise; for it forms the basis of that defence of free-thinking in Chap. XX. which is universally regarded as a part of his reply to the decree of excommunication[1]. It was apparently for the resident pupil at Rhijnsburg (most likely Albert Burgh, a pompous youth who became Romanist, and tried to convert his heretical instructor[2]), that Spinoza analysed the first book of Descartes' Principia, and reduced it to geometrical form; afterwards (1663) publishing it, with the second similarly treated, and with an appendix of Cogitata Metaphysica, as the vehicle of his own independent reflections. It is curious to find, in this supplement, a strenuous defence of free-will, as inseparable from the nature of the human soul; and also, twice over, the balanced statement, that the necessity of the Divine decrees and the liberty of the human will are both alike certain, and yet irreconcilable[3], though we know from his 'Short Treatise' that he had for some years been a complete determinist. Meyer's excuse for him[4] that, having engaged to instruct his pupil in Cartesianism, he was bound in honour not to criticise his text-book, presents him in the false light of a truly servile teacher; and, even if it held good for the mere personal relations of the hour, can have no application to a book revised and completed for public use; for whatever engagement there is between author and reader, is surely a promise not of disguise but of simple truth-telling.

is Lucii Antistii Constantis de jure Ecclesiasticorum. Alethopoli. Ap. C. Val. Pennatum. Its aim is to show that the rights attributed to the clergy are fictitious, and that sovereigns and magistrates are supreme.

[1] Graetz reckons the composition of the Theol.-pol. treatise as part of the work on which Spinoza was engaged between 1660 and 1664 (X. p. 178). This is probably correct with regard to the theoretical outline of the treatise; but the more special Biblical part was evidently occupying him in the year following. See Ep. XXIX.

[2] Epp. LXVII, LXXVI.

[3] Cogit. Metaph. II. cap. xii. (Vol. II. pp. 502–505); I. iii. (Vol. II. p. 471); II. xi. (Vol. II. p. 500).

[4] Preface (Vol. II. pp. 377, 378).

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Besides the three treatises already mentioned, his great work, the Ethica, was not only projected, but under his hand; for the correspondence of Van Vries and Meyer[1] shows that Part I. had been forwarded to the Amsterdam Club and discussed at its meetings. The propositions criticised are entirely identified; but they did not occupy then the position ultimately assigned to them. Thus his largest enterprise had made its first and most difficult steps of advance in 1663; and, in completing the catalogue of Rhijnsburg labours, marks the two years there as by far the most intellectually energetic of Spinoza's life. They originated every philosophical work, except the political fragment, which proceeded from his pen; and carried one of them to publication, all of them pretty far *in medias res;* and, as a pre-requisite to this, they matured and fixed his conceptions of 'Geometrical Method,' as applicable to non-geometric subjects; and finally settled his exact relations to Descartes' philosophy, and so altered its proportions as to give symmetrical place to the new thought he had to put into it.

His critical attitude towards Cartesianism, which the clergy had now taken to patronising, brought some obloquy upon him; and, in order to go out of hearing of this, he removed in 1663 to the village of Voorburg, about a league from the Hague, and made it his place of residence for the next seven years. The history of his thought and of his industry now becomes one of simple persistency in tasks begun. From his desire to *define* his logical procedure before he followed it, he addressed himself first to his essay *De Intellectus Emendatione*, and never lost sight of it: yet he soon found that the metaphysical truths towards which it was to mark out the way had to be assumed either at the outset, or in laying the track; so that he could not secure the subordination he required, and might just as well go at once into the heart of his philosophy, and let its logic speak

[1] Epp. VIII–X, XII.

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for itself. The result was that the book intended to be preliminary lagged behind its proposed sequel, and remained a fragment at last; yet betrayed its first design by promising for the greater work more than it contained[1]. It was evidently on the Ethics that he was concentrating his zeal. By June, 1665, he sends to Bresser the portion of MS. which reaches the twenty-first proposition of Part IV[2], with the remark that he had not intended to part with it till his work was done; but finding the conclusion linger more than he expected, deems it better to make two parcels instead of one. In the next September, we find him telling Oldenburg that he is at work upon 'angels, prophecies, and miracles[3];' evidently implying that he has turned his hand to the Biblical part of the Theologico-political Treatise; so that his posthumous work was actually finished, while his first original publication (for the Princ. Phil. Cart. was but an exposition) was yet on the stocks, and his philosophy had set into its final form when he was thirty-three years of age. The completion of his Theological Treatise he could hardly spread over more than a couple of years. Above all his productions, it bears traces of being written *currente calamo*, as indeed we should expect from a defensive record of long-formed opinions for which he had suffered. As it was

[1] This significant fact is pointed out by Sigwart (Op. Cit. p. 158), who gives as examples of it the unfulfilled promises to explain in his 'Philosophy' the meaning of the phrases *vis nativa*, *opera intellectualia*, and *quærere in animâ*; and to determine the question 'whether ideas themselves are subject to decay.' The promises are found in the notes to De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. pp. 11, 12, 28.

[2] Ep. XXVIII.; in which the MS. is said to go as far as the *80th proposition* of the Third Part. There is no such high figure in any of the parts as they now stand. Trendelenburg has doubtless given the true explanation, by reckoning the Third and Fourth Parts together as one in the original design, and subsequently divided in order to prevent excessive disproportion in the parts. The 80th proposition from the opening of the Third Part (which alone he professes to send) brings us to IV. 21. The order of subject, as laid out at first, was more logically compact than the revised arrangement: viz. (1) metaphysic; (2) doctrine of knowledge; (3) the emotions; (4) the intellect. See Trendelenburg's Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie, III. pp. 294, 295.

[3] Ep. XXIX.

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published in 1670, and he had apparently no ulterior literary design, we cannot wonder if he felt himself at liberty to listen at last to the entreaties of friends, that he would quit his village retirement and remove to the Hague, within constant reach of the books and men and affairs that had the highest interest for him.

To the Hague accordingly he went; first, to the widow Van Werve, but soon to a less expensive room in the house of a painter, Henry van der Spijck, and his wife, on the Paviljoensgracht; the chief economy being that here he could provide his own meals, and so spend as little on them as he chose. It is certainly remarkable that here, in this city of free and energetic life, his intellectual productiveness seems to suffer sudden arrest; and that the only fruit of the remaining seven years should be the fragment of a Political Treatise on no great scale. It seems too early, at the age of thirty-eight, for so strong an arm to rest upon the oar and float down the stream. Nor does it appear that he reverted at the Hague to anything like the personal position which he had occupied at Amsterdam, as the virtual head of a growing school, training itself under his influence. His room indeed, even at Voorburg, and still more in the city, was sought by frequent visitors; but, instead of docile pupils on the spot, they were inquisitive and perhaps jealous foreigners, like Leibniz, or neighbours, like Huyghens, no less entitled to be law-givers than himself. In the absence of any further literary biography, his relations with some of these distinguished men assume a prominent interest. His correspondence with Huyghens, if we had but both sides of it, would present a study of comparative personality of exceptional value: but the letters of the great physicist we see only in Spinoza's three replies[1]. As it is, we gain the

[1] Epp. XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI. The person indicated by the six or seven asterisks prefixed to these letters is identified as Huyghens by a reference, near the end of the last, to his 'small treatise on Dioptrics;' of which, in a letter written near the same time, Oldenburg makes mention as being by Huyghens. See Ep. XXIX.; and Trendelenburg, Op. Cit. p. 293.

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impression that, while Huyghens' mind engaged itself deeply in metaphysical reflections, Spinoza's interest in physical problems, beyond his optical range, was comparatively languid; for when Oldenburg eagerly enquires from him, as an observer on the spot, about Huyghens' pendulum clock and cycloidal pendulum, he replies that he knows nothing about them, and seems quite insensible to the magnitude of these inventions and discoveries. This one-sided sympathy was perhaps the reason why a correspondence commenced when the writers were within a league of each other (for it belongs to the Voorburg period) was not continued when one was at the Hague and the other at Paris (whither Huyghens removed in 1666).

In 1674 there appears upon the scene another correspondent, of genius less capacious than Huyghens, but scarcely less brilliant and penetrating,—Ehrenfried Walter von Tschirnhausen, a Bohemian noble, then twenty-three years of age, who had studied at Leyden, and early gained high distinction in mathematical and physical science. It would detain us too long to follow him through his energetic and romantic career. We can mark only the characteristics which retain his name in the history of human knowledge. He fixed attention on *caustic curves*, and determined their equation and properties: he invented the burning lens, and contrived to produce it on an enormous scale; and the art of porcelain-manufacture is due to him. Impulsive and open-minded, he scattered his profusion of ideas with a generosity which often deprived him of their fruits; and, expecting others to do the same, he asked Spinoza's leave to show Leibniz in Paris the MS. of the Ethica, and was surprised to receive a refusal from the author's Jewish circumspection [1]. The acquaintance with Leibniz (then, i.e. 1675, æt. 29) was new to them both: both were struck by his large accomplishments; in the presence of which Tschirnhausen was as ready with his

[1] Epp. LXX, LXXII.

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trust as Spinoza (who as yet knew him only by letter) with his suspicions. For these there was some semi-political pretext; for Leibniz, then in the service of the Elector of Mainz, had lent himself to a project of that prince and his minister Von Boyneburg (a convert to the Church of Rome) for reuniting the Catholics and Protestants and, in the interests of such union, establishing a rigorous censorship of the press; and as this project looked to Paris for support, the doubt arose, whether it was not on some secret mission that Leibniz had gone thither from his work at Frankfort. But behind this pretext there lay an inherent antipathy between the ingenuous and the ingenious philosopher, the transparent truth-seeker and the contriving system-maker;—an antipathy which, a year later, suddenly became mutual, after Leibniz had visited Spinoza at the Hague. Though the interview was occupied chiefly in political conversation, yet Leibniz speaks of Spinoza's metaphysics as 'strange,' and 'full of paradoxes[1].' He had certainly got a sight of the MS. Ethics at Paris; so that Spinoza's prohibition appears to have come too late.

Tschirnhausen's letters present, in a tone of modest independence, a series of acute and pertinent enquiries on all the characteristic principles of Spinoza's philosophy,—its Determinism[2], its theory of Discovery[3], its ontological doctrine of God and Nature[4]; on the first, adhering to Descartes; on the third, suggesting a fatal difficulty, which Spinoza confesses himself obliged to reserve for future removal; and only on the second, acknowledging large agreement and important obligations; the measure of which is apparent to any one who compares his *Medicina Mentis* (1695) with Spinoza's fragment, *De Intellectus Emendatione*. The replies to these letters are unusually careful, not to say anxious; as if Spinoza felt himself confronted by a critic as

[1] Theodicée, § 376. Comp. Ep. to the Abbé Galois.
[2] Epp. LVII, LVIII.
[3] Epp. LIX, LX. [4] Epp. LXIII-LXVI, LXXX-LXXXIII.

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truth-loving as himself, who had the art of touching weaknesses never owned before.

The favourable impression of Tschirnhausen's intellectual genius which we gain from this correspondence, is extended to his moral nature by some delightful letters of his to Huyghens, found by Van Vloten in the Leyden library, and published, with one of Huyghens's own, in his Supplement[1]. Seldom has the pure scientific spirit assumed a more attractive form than in the lives and relations of these two men.

In the third year (1673) of his residence at the Hague, Spinoza was invited by the Elector Palatine, Karl Ludwig, to become Professor Ordinarius of Philosophy at Heidelberg. This prince was brother to Descartes' correspondent, the Princess Elizabeth; and shared the liberal interest in philosophical studies which prevailed in his family; and he authorised Professor Johann Ludwig Fabricius, in communicating the invitation, to guarantee perfect liberty of teaching, provided only that the religion of the country were not made the object of attack. The indefinite character of this proviso, and a reluctance to exchange the habits of a solitary thinker for those of a pledged teacher, induced Spinoza to decline the appointment, and remain in his safe retirement.

This invitation was the more liberal on the part of the Elector, and perhaps the less attractive to Spinoza, from its coinciding in time with the panic excited by the Theologico-political Treatise. Though this book was anonymous, the authorship was no secret; and, though written in Latin, it created an excitement far beyond the circle of the learned; so that Spinoza, who abhorred the disturbance it was always his fate to produce, was alarmed by the rumoured intention of a certain Professor to issue a Dutch translation in satisfaction of the public curiosity, and wrote eagerly to Jarigh Jelles to find out the translator and stop his proceeding. His anxiety was in part occasioned by the appearance of a book (*Homo Politicus*), which brought discredit on his

[1] Suppl. pp. 319–350.

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theory of society, through shameless inferences drawn from its principle of egoism and its right of the strongest; commending whatever license and fraud and perfidy could be perpetrated with impunity. The very impudence of the book suggests that it may have been only the satire of a critic; but Spinoza, to whom everything was serious, took it for the aberration of a disciple, and, in his first disgust, thought of disclaiming and answering its reasonings[1]. Though he abandoned this and every other polemical purpose, he noted the effect of his book with sensitive vigilance. It was attacked at Leipzig by Jacob Thomasius, at Utrecht by Melchior and Mansvelt, at Jena by Museus, at Leyden by Van Blyenbergh. Of these he takes no notice. But when a private correspondent (John Oosten, a Rotterdam surgeon) forwards to him a letter of Dr. Lambert van Velthuysen, containing a critical abstract of the treatise, he explains and defends his position, though strongly protesting that the report of his book is hardly less a caricature than Voët's account of Descartes[2]. When preparing, four years afterwards, some notes for a new edition, he applied to Velthuysen for permission to cite his criticisms (anonymously, if preferred), as the basis of a reply[3]. The work being proscribed by the States, at the instigation of the Synods, the intended revision of the text never took place; and the materials for it appeared in the form of annotations to the treatise in the collected works.

This treatise, with the previous exposition of its principles

[1] Ep. XLIV.

[2] Epp. XLII, XLIII. Until the appearance of Van Vloten and Land's second volume, the chronological place of these two letters had to be determined purely by internal evidence; from consideration of which Professor Pollock had referred them to 1673; and I, to 1676. It now appears, however, that the *Dutch manuscript* of the first letter carries its own date, Jan. 24, 1671, which was absent from the published Latin form. The answer, naturally, would not be many days later. This disposes of all conjectural reasoning on the matter: and I take the opportunity of accepting the learned editors' refutation, in the preface to their second volume, of a note of mine on the subject, on p. 93 of a little book called 'A Study of Spinoza.'

[3] Ep. LXIX.

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while it was in progress, was apparently the chief cause of a ten years' suspension of intercourse with Oldenburg (viz. 1665 to 1675). On receiving the author's presentation, he had sent, with his acknowledgment, a criticism upon its hostile bearing towards religion, which Spinoza refrained from answering. The coolness and silence which ensued are suddenly ended in June, 1675, by a letter from Oldenburg, retracting his former opinion of the treatise, begging Spinoza to write openly, and promising to keep his confidence and defend him against prejudice[1]. What can have brought about this *volte-face* in the Secretary's attitude? The next month brings from Amsterdam a letter of Schuller's which suggests the explanation. *Tschirnhausen* is in London; and reports that Oldenburg and Boyle had been possessed by the strangest conception of Spinoza's character, till he had the opportunity of setting them right; but that they were most ready to be corrected, and now gave him all honour, and even held his treatise in high esteem[2]. It is the misfortune, however, of theological as of conjugal reconciliations that, if needed once, they are apt to be needed again; and scarcely is a month gone before Oldenburg, having heard that the formidable *Ethics* are about to be published, entreats the author to introduce nothing 'which may seem to invalidate the practice of religious virtue; the degeneracy of the age eagerly catching at doctrines which in their results seem to support current vices.' This said, he consents to take charge of a few copies, provided they are snugly sent in a parcel to a private merchant, without any indication of the contents[3]. Whether, if he had published, Spinoza would have submitted to all these disinfecting processes, he is not obliged to say; for at Amsterdam he finds such an array of hostile antipathy drawn up to give the book a ruinous reception, that he determined to hold it in reserve. So far, he can relieve the Secretary's trepidations. But, that he may profit by the admonitions given him, he begs to be informed

[1] Ep. LXI. [2] Ep. LXIII. [3] Ep. LXII.

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what doctrines of his are supposed to invalidate the practice of religious virtue; and what are the passages of his published treatise which suggest this danger, and excite scruples in the minds of learned men [1]. Oldenburg, in a curt reply, having enumerated the objectionable points,—(1) identification of God and nature; (2) the invalidity of miracles; (3) the silence about Christ's incarnation and satisfaction, —a three months' correspondence on these points ensues, without producing any satisfactory result, the last word being said by Oldenburg, nearly two years before Spinoza's death.

Throughout the correspondence of Spinoza there is one negative feature which excites a natural surprise. It runs through a period of intense political excitement in Western Europe, in which Holland played a central part. Two wars with England, rendered memorable by fleets and naval battles on a scale unknown before, and claiming such victims as Van Tromp, De Ruyter, and Turenne; alliance with England and Sweden, disgraced by the treachery of our Charles II; invasion of the United Provinces by Louis XIV, pushed, by favour of a drought in 1672, as far as Utrecht, and then, on the apparent eve of conquest, vanishing in disastrous retreat; a Dutch fleet raiding in the Thames, and threatening London itself; vehement domestic dissensions between the adherents of the House of Orange and the Republicans, leading up to the murder of the De Witts; all this was passing while the pen was in Spinoza's hand, and he was directing letters to Paris, to London, to the anxious cities of his own land; and yet his reader might suppose, for all that he tells him, that the world was in the profoundest calm. From Oldenburg he hears of the plague in London, and the migration of the Royal Society to Oxford; of the fire of London; of an expected second great sea-fight; and receives distinct enquiries respecting the proposals for peace, the conveyance of Swedish troops into Germany, the march of the Bishop of Münster, with an expression of

[1] Ep. LXVIII.

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opinion that next summer all Europe will be involved in war; but on no one of these topics does his reply contain a single word. Nothing so strongly marks the intellectual solitude of his nature, as this reticence with regard to the living drama of the world. Yet, when its action came near enough to his experience and his friends, he was ready with his convictions and even with his sympathy. He was intimate with the De Witts, and indeed had a small life-pension from them; he sided with them against the supporters of the House of Orange; and at the news of their violent death (August 27, 1672) he burst into a passion of tears. And in this grief there was no selfish alloy; for, when the heirs of the statesmen contested his further claim to the pension, he was so ready to surrender it rather than allow of any dispute, that they were touched by his self-abnegation and withdrew their objection. What was thus secured to him was his chief dependence for the remainder of his life.

Once, and not long after this, we find Spinoza in a position surprisingly at variance with his usual habits and ways of thinking; viz. in the camp at Utrecht of the French invaders of his country; and *that*, not as a negotiator for their departure, but as invited guest, and under the special passport, of their Commander-in-chief, the Prince de Condé. The account given of this violent misplacement of the recluse philosopher rather enhances than relieves its incomprehensibility. In the army of the Prince was an Evangelical Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards Brigadier) Stoupe, of Swiss troops, who had been a preacher in the Walloon Church of the Savoy, London, in Cromwell's time, and continued to take a lively interest in theology. In a book upon religion in Holland, he had reproached the clergy in that country for allowing the 'Theologico-political Treatise' to remain without any effective reply; and had entered into a correspondence with Spinoza of which the contents are unknown. It led, however, to a proposal that the philosopher should visit the camp and be introduced to the Prince, who was anxious to see him; and the proposal was

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reinforced by the assurance that the Grand Monarque would accord a pension to Spinoza, on receiving any work dedicated to him. The proposal, which was accompanied by a safe-conduct, was accepted; but the Prince being absent on business which detained him, the interview took place only with Luxemburg, the second in command, and with other officers of rank. After several days of fruitless waiting for Condé, Spinoza returned home; not without declining the offered pension, on the pretext that he had no present purpose of publishing any book. It is not wonderful that, on his reappearance at the Hague, he was looked on as a spy, and that Van der Spijck was afraid lest a mob should wreck his house. Spinoza reassured him by saying that, if they came, he would go out to tell them how good a Republican he was, and how the object of his journey had been well known and approved by 'the most considerable persons of the State;' and if then they chose to treat him as they had treated the De Witts, so it must be[1]. On this story I will make but two remarks: (1) the private motives assigned for the visit to an enemy's quarters are altogether inadequate and out of character; it would need the vainest of men, and the emptiest of public spirit, to be thus coaxed and flattered into the salons of Utrecht, usurped by the conquering foe, and to listen without instant indignation to the hint of a foreign patron's bribe; nor can anything be more ludicrously matched with Spinoza's *retenue* and severe simplicity. (2) The language of Spinoza to his frightened landlord implies some public purpose in his visit, approved by the chief persons in the State; and such purpose, in the extremely critical state of affairs, it might be important to conceal by intrusting it to the least likely of all agents, and disguising it under personal pretexts: that it died away without making any sign may be due simply to the absence of Condé, and the rapidly succeeding disasters that overtook the army of occupation. We have no conjectural clue to any possible intended negociation, beyond this: that the

[1] Coler and Boulainvilliers, ap. Paulus, II. pp. 624–627.

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House of Orange represented the Netherlands of which France was jealous and afraid; and that House was no less the object of suspicion and dread to the Republican citizens at home; and it is conceivable that this concurrent enmity might serve as a basis for negociating, on the one hand, the withdrawal of the military occupation, and on the other, the establishment of a Federal Commonwealth without the unity of an hereditary head. A wet season and a flooded country in 1673 dispensed with the necessity of making any terms with the invader; the army could neither stay nor fly, but wasted away in baffled retreat, and left the Dutch factions to settle their own affairs.

The deepening interest of domestic politics doubtless helped Spinoza to concentrate his attention on the theory and structure of the State, as expounded in his last unfinished treatise. Else it is probable that his declining strength would have rendered his later years still less fruitful. Though not subject to serious illnesses, or perhaps preserved from them by frugal living and regular hours, he apparently inherited a consumptive constitution; as is pretty plainly betrayed by the fine portrait at Wolfenbüttel, with its bright eyes and narrow chest, and somewhat hollow cheeks; and his vitality seems to have slowly ebbed away for some years before the end. But his even and uncomplaining temper, his habitual cheerfulness, his steady industry with his lenses and recreation with his microscope, his friendly chats with his hostess, and pipe with her husband, and good words with the children, kept the mechanism of their common life going so simply, that no change was observable. In all his intercourse with his inferiors he was at ease with himself and most winning to them; his wariness and mistrust were reserved for his equals and his opponents. In reading some few passages of his writings in which he has not suppressed the thrill of scorn and indignation, and in looking at his swarthy complexion and intensity of face, we may well believe that there was in him a southern fire which rendered his equanimity

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an attainment not easy to be secured. If so, however, the conquest was so complete that his nearest associates, the weak and dependent, who usually come in for the last remnants of irritability, never felt it at all. 'This it is,' says Renan, 'that is perhaps his truest honour, that he had the sincere esteem and affection of the simple natures living around him. Rien ne vaut l'estime des petits; leur jugement est presque toujours celui de Dieu[1].' On Saturday, February 20, 1677, Spinoza came down from his room as usual in the afternoon, and while enjoying a pipe with his host, asked him about the sermon which he and his wife had been attending in preparation for the Shrovetide communion; returning upstairs in time for early rest. Next morning, he again came down and talked with them before church-time. They noticed nothing unusual, except that Ludwig Meyer, his physician, had come over to him from Amsterdam. By his order, they boiled a chicken and gave him the *bouillon;* and both then, and again after church, he took his food with good appetite. There was nothing to suggest any departure from the habits of the day, and the good people of the house went to their afternoon service. When they returned, they learned with astonishment that at 3 P.M. Spinoza had died. Meyer, who alone was with him, returned by the evening boat to Amsterdam, without, apparently, reporting any particulars respecting the last hour; but having helped himself, as Van der Spijck was careful to tell, to a ducatoon and some little money that was on the table, as well as to a silver-handled knife. The funeral took place on February 25. Its expense and a few small debts having been paid, his sister Rebecca found the residue not worth claiming. The one enduring legacy which he left, his desk, with its manuscript contents, went, as he had desired, to Johann Rieuwertz, a printer at Amsterdam, who was apparently

[1] Spinoza: Conférence tenue à la Haye le 21 Février, 1877, 200me anniversaire de la mort de Spinoza. Paris, 1877, p. 17.

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authorised to act as his executor. So ended his life-record. But his true history scarcely opens till this is closed.

§ 3. *Are Geometrical Ethics Possible?*

To a modern, and especially an English reader, no two things can appear more incongruous than the subject and the method announced on the title-page of Spinoza's great posthumous work: '*Ethics*,' treated in '*geometrical fashion*.' Take any familiar ethical question, e.g. whether it is ever right to tell a lie; or to threaten a refractory urchin with the birch rod; or to touch wine; or to use force against wrong. How are we to answer such questions 'geometrically?' And if they can be so answered, why are they yet debated? Does not Spinoza here combine two incompatible types of problem, viz. the *moral*, where there is *always*, and the *mathematical*, where there is *never*, a possible alternative?

This is a pertinent enquiry, and hits at once the fundamental difference between Descartes and Spinoza in the preconceptions which they brought to their speculations. Neither Geometry nor Ethics were to Spinoza what they had been to Descartes. Not the former; for to Descartes its demonstrations had only a *contingent* certainty, instituted by the will of God, who might, if He had preferred, have made false what now is true; while to Spinoza (and, as we have seen, to Malebranche) the relations of quantity and figure were uncreated and immutable, as much eternal data for the highest mind as for the human. Not the latter; for to Descartes, *Moral* law was a rule which it was possible for us either to obey or to disobey, and which we were bound to take as our guide; while to Spinoza it was only *Natural* law in the highest instance of its inevitable working. In both cases, the peculiarity of the newer philosopher consists in the subjection or reduction of all being, whether Divine or human, to Necessity, and the exclusion of any possible other than the actual. When this is done, Geometry becomes *absolute* truth, giving law to *all* Mind,

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infinite or finite, and the cogency of its reasonings expresses eternal connections in real existence: it tells the things, not that simply *are*, but that *must be*. And Ethics become a doctrine, no longer of what we *ought to be*, but of what we *shall be*, under assignable conditions,—an account of our constitution as a natural object, modified by the conjoint play of its inward make and its outward exposure. In the light, or under the shadow, of this common preconception of an all-determining Necessity, the relation between Geometry and Ethics ceases to be obscure. In the 'applied mathematics' we have already carried quantitative relations, determined in the abstract, into physical things, weights, motions, pressures, intensities, and thus created science after science, from mechanics to electricity. By extension of the same process to the measurement of sensory and motory stimuli in living beings, it is conceivable that they too might be brought under knowledge as exact as that of the chemist or astronomer. And if the ideas special to man are uniform data of his nature, or determinately contributed or modified by his experience, it can only be the greater complexity of his phenomena that delays their reduction to a decipherable order. When the delay is over, the whole of nature will be seen in unbroken continuity, rigorously deduced from self-evident primary certainties as little questionable as the axioms and postulates of the geometer. To 'demonstrate ethics in a geometrical way' is therefore, in this view, to show how the several varieties of human character arise from the nature of things, just as necessarily as the equality of alternate angles from parallelism in the lines intersected to make them. That this is Spinoza's meaning he himself explains in these words: 'The affections of hatred, anger, envy, &c. in themselves considered, follow from the same necessity and power of nature as all other particular things; and refer themselves therefore to definite causes, and possess definite properties, which are just as worth knowing as the properties of anything else which we find it interesting

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simply to contemplate. So I shall treat of the nature and energy of the affections and the mind's influence on them, as of God and the mind in the preceding books; and shall deal with human actions and appetencies just as *if it were a question of lines, planes, and solids*[1].'

Supposing this design successfully executed, it would obviously give us only a *psychological* account, and not at all an *ethical* doctrine, of the human affections; just as a natural history of instincts in birds and beasts, detecting their causes and defining their properties, does not constitute a *moral* science. Perhaps it will be said that it is psychological only so long as you confine yourself to the study of cause and effect among the phenomena; but that, as soon as you compare them together as better or worse, with a view to minimise the latter, the enquiry becomes ethical; so that this character depends upon the fact that 'man may be modified,' and his more harmful affections restrained. But the beasts also may be modified, and their more troublesome propensities controlled; without on that account our regarding the horse-breaker, or even the trainer of a 'happy family,' as a moralist. It is not modification by others, but self-modification; not the application of an irresistible necessity, but the alternative possibilities of a free will, with which ethical phenomena enter, and from which ethical language obtains all its meaning. Short of this, there can be no doctrine of *Duty*, but only a doctrine of relative *Good*. To this accordingly Spinoza's 'Ethics' are limited.

Taking them under this limitation, let us consider whether they admit of being investigated *more geometrico*, so as to take rank with the sciences of exact demonstration. It was Descartes who inspired the ambition to extend the mathematical procedure to the whole field of human enquiry. At the opening of his 'Treatise on Method,' he expresses his surprise that the only secure form of proof,

[1] Eth. III. Intr. Vol. I. 125.

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the mathematical, had never been applied in philosophy, but had stopped short with mechanics; and, in following this hint, Spinoza only works on the same lines as in his abstract of Descartes' 'Principia' and his own appended 'Cogitata Metaphysica.' The question is, whether he can thus gain for philosophy the 'security' which is the acknowledged advantage of the mathematics: to ascertain this, we must examine where that security lies.

It does not lie in the severity of the deductive process. In geometry we deduce, by the application of certain stated rules of thought (Axioms), assumed as self-evident, the properties of certain defined hypothetical existences (Definitions), assumed as real (Postulates). The rigour of the deduction may be unimpeachable; but if the assumptions from which it starts are questionable, the conclusions reached cannot but be insecure. It is indeed a practice familiar to the mathematician to reason out, for some subsidiary purpose in a large investigation, the consequences of a supposition known to be more or less wide of the truth. This process might easily be extended till not one of the original assumptions remained true, yet all the inferences from them were logically drawn; and so a geometry purely fictitious would arise from the perverse ingenuity of some Pseudo-Euclid. It would be possible, I suppose, to construct a system of Optics on the supposition that darkness was a positive element, and light its negation, just as you may interpret and measure motion by taking your stand on either of the two bodies which are changing their relations, as if there you were at rest. Nay, it is not impossible that from two inconsistent hypotheses may result, to an astonishing extent, the very same system of consequences, actually verified in experience; as in the case of the Newtonian and the undulatory theories of light; though at last, no doubt, some phenomenon is sure to turn up which is missing from one of the logical chains. Geometry would be undistinguishable from a mere hypothetical science, if it had no credentials beyond its strict reasoning.

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From this fate it is saved by the nature of the assumptions from which it starts. All its definitions are definitions of *figures;* figures are limitations cut out of *Space;* Space is to us an *à priori or necessary thought of a necessary thing*, i.e. of a thing the non-being of which is inconceivable. Thought and thing are here inseparably united; the idea of Space in the mind is the knowledge of Space out of the mind. It gives us the very *meaning* of reality, the condition and *field* of *Dasein* or objective existence. If you choose to say with Kant, it is but 'the form of Sense,' it makes no difference; in that case, so too is *Dasein* or objective existence; and the antithesis of thought and being itself becomes ideal. But whatever we mean by existence, by objectivity, by reality, is there, whenever we think of Space. Hence the definitions of geometry are not *nominal*, but *real:* they give, not the meaning of a word alone, or the essential parts of a conception, but *the nature* of a thing: they carry with them an assumption which it is impossible for us to question, that what is defined exists or may exist; and therefore the properties which they enable us to deduce are features present in the nature of things; and geometry is intrinsically ready to play the part of an applied science. It is this start from a position common to both worlds, of thought and of being, that makes the rational progression of the geometrician an advance also into the *ordo rerum;* and renders the cogency of the thought an exponent of the necessity of the corresponding things; and weaves the system of the world into a tissue of relations answering to the organism of demonstrated truths.

It was certainly a tempting suggestion that perhaps, if *Substance* instead of Space were put at the starting-point, the contents of *Being* might be made to emerge, with all the necessity attaching to the properties of figure; for, was not the thought of 'substance' (ὑποκείμενον) also the thought of a real existence? Why then should we not be able to work out a *Hypokeimenometry*, as we have constructed a *geometry*,—a deduction of the properties of the universe

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from its substantive ground, just as we reach the properties of particular spaces from defined modifications of the universal? The analogy was sufficiently promising to induce an attempt to extract the All from the One.

The analogy, however, is misleading. Granting that in our minds the words Space and Substance both stand for *à priori* ideas, and that beyond our minds they stand for real existence, there is yet this difference between them; that the one is *single and absolute*, the other is but *a member of a pair*, and *only relative;* the necessity of the one is *unconditional*, the necessity of the other is *conditional.* If you think of a quality, attribute, or phenomenon, you must think of a Substance that has it: the idea is of *a relation*, as much as the idea of father and child, of back and front; but, in the absence of phenomenon or quality, there is no need and no room for substance in our thought, any more than for a back where there is no front, or likeness where there is but unity. But there is no such condition attached to your thinking of Space and cognising it as real: you cannot think at all, even of *Nothing*, without its being there: whatever else you discharge from your presence, you cannot clear it out; and if you could, it would carry away Substance too. Substance, in the world of being is conditional on Space, and in the world of thought on quality or perceived phenomenon; Space is conditional on nothing, and is the condition of all else. Relative indeed to the *thinking Ego* it may be (in order to provide for Kant's doctrine); but in the non-ego it is *absolute*, which Substance is not.

And hence results a further difference. When you have said that Substance is *the ground of quality*, you have assigned to it its *only predicate;* there is no more to be said about it; nor is this proposition fruitful of ulterior ones, unless you like to take it in the inverse direction and say that quality inheres in Substance. As a principle of further knowledge it is altogether barren. If it were susceptible of analysis, it would yield only the components of its meaning, and no definite qualities. But Space, as the ground of

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quantity, has *à priori* several distinct predicates. It is infinite; it has three dimensions; it is susceptible of containing forms through inclosure of parts. And it is out of this plurality of predicates that the numerous definitions and axioms are supplied whence undiscovered relations of magnitude and figure emerge. Without this affluence of objective contents, mere nominal definitions of conceptions would fail to help geometry forward a single step. But Spinoza imagined that he had only to start with an accurate series of such conceptions reduced to their essence, in order to follow the tracks of necessity through nature, and demonstrate the inner construction of the world. He professes to show that from the absolute nature of substance are derivable all the experienced characteristics of things, as inevitably as from the definition of a triangle the equality follows of its three angles to two right angles[1]. There can be no greater fallacy. From no definition of a general conception can you ever infer a more specific that falls under it; precisely because what makes it specific is some added mark not present in the general, but taken on by it, so as to increase its comprehension while contracting its range. Besides the marks of the genus we must have a principle of differentiation, before we can advance to the species; and this the deductive method cannot supply. Had we nothing to work with but the definition of a triangle, we could never discover the equality of its angles to two right angles; we have to call to our aid the definition of right angle, the representation of external angles, and the equation of an external angle with adjacent internal to two right angles; and these are elements, not of the mere conception of triangle, but supplied by construction from the *à priori* predicates of space. This was clearly seen by Tschirn-

[1] Ego me satis clare ostendisse puto (Prop. 16) a summa Dei potentia sive infinita natura infinita infinitis modis, hoc est, omnia necessario effluxisse, vel semper eadem necessitate sequi, eodem modo ac ex natura trianguli ab eterno et in eternum sequitur, ejus tres angulos equari duobus rectis. Eth. I. xvii. Schol.

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hausen, and pointed out by him when it was too late[1]. In his reply, otherwise unsatisfactory, Spinoza candidly admits the justice of the criticism; and hits upon the distinction which affords the only hope of escape from it; viz. that the definitions which are barren are exclusively *nominal;* but that those of *real being* present an essence which may be developed into numerous predicates. Under this cover he proposes to protect his definition of 'Substance;' without, however, rescuing it from its character of a purely relative notion, or settling it in any relation to reality except as its synonyme[2]. I have sometimes fancied that these deductive world-builders may have deceived themselves by the mere sound of the logical rule 'Veritas universalis infert veritatem particularis,' especially in an age when the word 'veritas' was used not only for the truth of a proposition, but for the real existence of a thing. But, of course, when we thus say that all the marks of the genus will be found in the species, we imply an overlapping residue which the genus does not provide.

Mathematics and metaphysics, then, do not start from similar primary assumptions, and invite by their analogy the same method of treatment; nor can we hope, by deduction from a list of definitions and axioms, to gain such a conspectus of the system of the universe as the geometricians give us of the properties and relations of figures. We cannot make ontology an exact science of necessary thought. But there is another fallacy involved in this fancied analogy with the mathematics. Besides putting together heterogeneous studies in the field of thought, it confounds under the same name (Necessity) heterogeneous relations in the distinct fields of thought and being. The 'Necessity' by which all things flow from the Supreme nature is a *causal* necessity, determining their genesis and their succession; or even if they be, not particular objects, but permanent *laws of objects*, still it gives them the field of extended being

[1] Ep. LXXXII. [2] Ep. LXXXIII.

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for their operation; and that operation on individuals is successive in time. But the 'necessity' which connects the equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles with the data of deduction is in the geometrician's understanding, and not in the things understood. He *learns* this property from the data, and other properties again from this; so that there is an order of knowing in which he passes from truth to truth about the triangle; and each step taken by his intelligence may be treated as cause of the next. This consecution, however, is limited to the cognitive process, and does not exist among the objects of cognition. The data do not *produce* the equality between the three angles and the two right angles; nor does this property produce the others which are subsequently inferred. They are all a co-existing group connected by a *reciprocal* necessity, without any history of their origin, one after another. Hence, there is no one exclusive order in which the learner is obliged to circulate among them; take what property he will as his datum, he can work his way logically thence to all the rest. For instance, you may define an ellipse from either of two modes of generating it; viz. the revolution, round the two foci, of the intersecting point of a vector from each; or the section of a right cone by a plane inclined to the base at an angle less than that which the sides make with the base; and, starting from either definition, you can arrive, only from opposite directions, at all the properties of the figure. They are as a chain which may be hung up from either end; or rather as a network, whose meshes may be counted off in several forms of series. Here, therefore, there is no *causality*; for causal order can never be inverted, or turned from consecutive into reciprocal; nor, among things that eternally coexist, can any one claim to be cause of another. The relations uniting them constitute an *ordo essendi*; whereas the relations of dependence in which derivative things flow from the all-determining Nature, constitute an *ordo fiendi*; and here for the first time do we alight upon the idea of *Cause*, or necessary order in *Time*,

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as distinguished from necessary co-ordination of the Timeless. This difference between *αἰτία* and *λόγος*, *Causa* and *Ratio*, is ignored by Spinoza: the nexus that unites the group and the nexus that links the chain he describes by the same terms: terms of *sequence*, applicable only to one, are given to both: from the *essence* of this or that nature attributes '*follow*' which are always there: dynamic terms, proper only to the phenomenal province, are thrust in among eternal coexistences: it is the supreme '*potentia*,' '*sive natura*,' whence infinite properties 'follow,' just in the way in which, from the triangle's nature 'follows' the equivalence of its angles to two right angles. Only, we never say that it is the 'power' of the triangle which makes this equivalence. It is of the utmost consequence to remember, in the study of Spinoza, this identification of logical cogency with dynamical efficiency; so that *causation* has with him its supreme expression in the relation between premisses and conclusion. It is remarkable that nowhere in his 'Ethics' does he supply any general definition of the word 'Cause,' or discuss the doctrine of which it is the symbol. We are left to infer his idea of it from its incidental use; nor is it possible to make these inferences consistent with each other. For example, he tells us that the human understanding is the *cause* as well as the *totality* of the conceptions (*Begriffe*) which it has; and he uses this proposition to justify the assertion that God is the *cause*, at the same time that He is the totality, of creatures and effects[1]. This certainly implies that the understanding has a producing efficiency, and is a *faculty* with conceptions at command. Yet, if we find him elsewhere identifying understanding with will[2], he further explains away will as a mere 'ens rationis,' a common term for all particular *volitions*, and no more the *cause* of them than humanity is the cause of Peter or any particular man[3]; and, similarly, understanding is not a faculty at all, but is

[1] Short treatise, 'De Deo,' &c. 1st Dial. sub fin. Vol. II. p. 278.
[2] Eth. II. xlix. Cor. [3] Ep. II. sub fin.

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related to particular acts of intelligence, precisely as *stoniness* is related to this or that stone[1]. It is a mere 'notio universalis,' the passive residuum of our conceptions when all their differences drop out; it neither answers to anything real, nor can *do* anything over and above what the particular conceptions do. Thus, he distinctly divests of causality the very 'understanding' for which before he had emphatically claimed it.

§ 4. *Conjectural History of Spinoza's Thought.*

The 'geometrical method' on which I have commented was far, I believe, from being the first thought or framework of Spinoza's philosophy: rather was it the mould in which its constituent parts, separately formed, were ultimately compressed or fused into an apparent unity. If it were my purpose to work out from his writings a chronological sketch of the genesis of his doctrine, I could not do better than adopt the three phases which Avenarius has treated as successive in his mental history: viz. (1) Naturalistic All-in-One; (2) Theistic All-in-One; (3) Substantive All-in-One[2]. The first of these he regards as expressed in the dialogues interwoven with the 'Short Treatise;' the second, in that treatise itself; the third, in the 'Ethics.' But looking less at relative *dates* (which after all are by no means certain) than at the known successive influences that were dominant in his mind, I prefer to say that in his problem there were two parts which engaged him, one after the other, and were brought into more or less definite form, before he had settled their relation to each other as members of a whole; the doctrine of God, and the doctrine of matter and mind. The former of these was the residuary presence of his Jewish Theism, transformed and *naturalised*, it may be, by the influence of Bruno and of the semi-pan-

[1] Eth. II. xlviii. Schol.

[2] Ueber die beiden ersten Phasen des Spinozischen Pantheismus, und das Verhältniss der 2ten zur 3ten Phase. Von Richard Avenarius. Leipzig, 1868, p. 11.

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theistic Hebrew philosophers. The latter was the direct adoption of the Cartesian dualism, of extension and thinking, as the component data of the known world. The one was essentially a *theology;* the other, mainly, an *anthropology;* in his hands the former was still a critique of religion; the latter a critique of science. And I think they subsisted for some time, side by side, in an indeterminate way, before they were welded into a system.

This distinction is not destroyed by the fact that we already meet, in the dialogues, with an express identification of Nature and God: Nature is the infinite all-including being, the immanent cause of all phenomena and creatures, as well as their totality; and though this is said all through of 'Nature,' just at the end the word 'God' is slipped in as its substitute and equivalent[1]. In the text of the 'Short Treatise' itself, we find the same interchange of terms; 'God is Truth, and truth is God,' the word 'truth' being used for 'reality[2].' And to this Pantheism we cannot even ascribe a *transcendent* type; for an express argument is introduced to prove that in God's understanding there is nothing which is not realised in Nature, and that the actual and the possible are coextensive, the world exhausting the perfections of God[3]. And it is even said that the Divine thought is simply the sum of creaturely thought; for so we must understand the words 'No modes of thought are to be ascribed to God but those which are in the creatures[4].' Such passages, if they stood alone, would certainly oblige us to say that the naturalistic conception had completely superseded the theistic. But, on the other hand, we meet with predicates of God which, evidently used without figure of speech, cannot be transferred to the world: we hear of not only His omnipotence, but His '*goodness*,' and His '*simplicity of will*[5].' It is also evident that, in speaking of the 'perfection' of God, Spinoza had not yet reduced the word

[1] De Deo, &c. I. ii. 1st Dial. Vol. II. 278.
[2] Ibid. II. v. xv. Vol. II. 310, 328.
[3] Ibid. I. ii. Vol. II. 266–275.
[4] Ibid. II. xxiv. Vol. II. p. 354.
[5] Ibid. I. ii. Vol. II. 268, 269.

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to the mere quantitative meaning of *completeness* or *all-inclusiveness*, or, as he expressed it, '*reality*,' irrespective of any qualitative idea of excellence or good. And, finally, he distinctly recognised the presence of *purpose* in the constitution of things; using the following illustration: as bees have no other object in their work than to store honey for the winter, while man who keeps them has another object, viz. to get honey for himself; so the particular end of our nature is different from the ultimate end of infinite nature, which uses us as tools[1]. This is the more significant, because at a later time there was no interpretation of the world which so touched in Spinoza the springs of passionate contempt, as that which saves in it anything like action for an end. From the internal inconsistency of these indications we may infer, that his ontological theory had not yet been thoroughly worked out, and that its naturalism, while fascinating his imagination, had still to make some conquest in his intellect. And from the vestiges of theistic conception it is evident, that his theological problem was only gradually solved, and as a centre of interest had not yet been left behind. From both features taken together it appears probable, that he formed his idea of the Supreme term of being not by atheistically expunging his original belief, and then reconstituting a substitute from the data of natural philosophy; but by rescinding from his religious conception one constituent after another as he found it to be untenable, i.e. incompatible with his postulates; parting by degrees with design, with free volition, with thought of a possible beyond the actual; reducing moral relations to natural necessity, and ideal perfectness to quantitative totality. There remained the idea of *Causality*, involving in some form or other that of *priority*; and this I conceive he left for a time, undefined and in darkness, suspended over the universe, while he descended and separately studied the world of which it was to give account.

[1] De Deo, &c. II. xxiv. Vol. II. 355, 356. See Trendelenburg. Beitr. III. p. 351.

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The key to that world he found, with Descartes, in the twofold nature of man, whose body and soul were only the culminating sample of extended being and thinking being, the coexistence of which constituted the universe. So long as he took this object apart for study, after the fashion of the natural philosopher, he retained the Cartesian language, and treated its two factors as '*Substances*.' Thus, he says that 'phenomenal nature' (being only a modification of these factors) 'cannot be rightly conceived without these substances[1];' and that the 'nature of man cannot exist or be conceived without *the attributes which are admitted to be substances*[2].' And even when he calls them '*attributes*' at this early time, he gives to that word the very same definition which in his Ethics he reserves for Substance, viz. 'things, or rather a self-subsisting essence which, as such, is self-revealing and self-evident[3];' or again, with a variation of phrase, 'by attribute I understand all that is conceived of itself and in itself, so that the conception of it does not involve the conception of anything else[4].' Nevertheless, he does not consistently identify the two terms. He applies the term 'attribute' (in the ordinary sense) to certain predicates of God, which it would be absurd to call 'substances;' viz. *necessary agency*, *Providence* (identified with the striving for self-conservation throughout all nature), and *fore-ordination*[5]. Yet in the same treatise he already announces the doctrine that, among the innumerable 'attributes' which must belong to an infinite nature, extension and thinking are the *only two* through which we conceive His essential operation. If there is any rule which he follows in the use of this mixed language, it is this: that what he treats as *Substance* relatively to phenomenal nature below it, he regards as *attribute* relatively to a prior infinite nature above it. In working out the former relation into its particular varieties, especially in the body and mind of man, he does

[1] De Deo, &c. I. viii. Vol. II. 296.
[2] Ibid. II. Pref. Vol. II. 301.
[3] Ibid. I. vii. Vol. II. 294.
[4] Ep. II.
[5] De Deo, &c. I. iv, v, vi.

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not as yet advance beyond the *amphibious* dualism of Descartes. The parallelism of extension and thinking seems to be involved in the position, that one substance cannot produce or affect another; but the 'animal spirits' step in and intercept the inference, precisely as we found them do in the Cartesian physiology. Indeed, interaction between the two 'substances' or 'attributes' is even expressly affirmed; e.g. the expression occurs 'whenever these attributes operate upon each other[1].' In almost all instances it is implied that the interaction takes place in the *direction from extension to thinking*, and not in the opposite; e.g. where it is maintained that all understanding is *passive*, produced by the operation of the *external object; which* in fact, it is said, is the affirmer or denier in perception, and *not we*[2]. And we find it distinctly said that no mode of thinking can produce motion or rest in the body[3]; though no similar general statement in the inverse direction can be cited from the 'Short Treatise.' It is obvious that if the mind is thus inoperative on body, yet the passive reflector of bodily objects, so that it merely photographs their affirmations, thinking is in us not in co-ordination with extension, but in subordination to it; and the ideal phenomena are thrown back into the material. Thus Spinoza is found oscillating between two opposite inconsistencies. If extension and thinking are independent 'substances,' or 'attributes' defined as such, man, as the lodging-house of these independents, is two natures, and not one; and the synchronism of these two natures is inconceivable without the doctrine of parallelism, which has no place in this early treatise; and, even with that doctrine, remains a mere mystery. If, on the other hand, thought is the passive *copy* of what things have to say of themselves, then extension alone is substantive, and the statement that 'there is in nature only a single thinking thing, which is expressed in an infinitude of ideas

[1] De Deo, &c. II. xix. Vol. II. 342.
[2] Ibid. II. xv. Vol. II. 328; xvi. 332; xvii. 335.
[3] Ibid. II. xix. Vol. II. 341.

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corresponding to the infinitude of things that are in nature[1],' affirms 'a thing' which has no existence; and, further, every idea, being the direct delivery into thought of the object itself, must be true, and there can be no departure of idea from ideatum; did we predicate of the object either more or less than we passively received from it, we should do a bit of thinking for ourselves, actively creating what was not given, or cancelling what was. Error therefore is excluded by this alternative hypothesis.

These unreconciled elements were gradually reduced to a self-consistent dualistic order, chiefly by discharging 'the animal spirits,' and setting up unconditionally the doctrine of parallelism. The world thus becomes to Spinoza the coequal development and expression of two substances, never separate, though never interacting. Yet somehow, in us, the two contrived to set up a unity; and similarly, in the universe, they cannot be supposed to be ultimately unrelated, and unable to give account of their invariable concurrence. So the next problem was, to find a formula of conception into which both these opposites could pass and be united. This could evidently not be done till they were divested of the character of *substances*, and compelled to surrender it to a term above them. The invention of this formula took Spinoza back to that Supreme region of being which his theology had left in such deep shadow; and required him to bridge over the theoretic chasm between the Unitary and the Manifold infinitude. This feat of speculative construction was needful to make a whole of his metaphysics and his natural science.

§ 5. *Absolute Entity; what is its Name?*

It was easy enough to take the first step, and determine what the deposed substances were to become; for they had already been accustomed to the alternative name of *Attributes*. But attributes *of what?* how are we to call 'that

[1] De Deo, &c. II. xx. Vol. II. 348.

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which is extended and thinks?' If we say '*God*,' we alter the meaning of that word by including under it material things. If we say '*Nature*,' we arbitrarily assume that all natural objects 'think.' If we select for the purpose the word which has been resigned, and say '*Substance*,' we commit a tautology; for 'substance' is simply that which has 'attributes;' so that our position is that 'extension and thought are attributes of that which has the attributes.' Spinoza employs them all, in spite of the misleading effect of such *new* signification, or *no* signification; *Nature* predominating at first; *Substance* at last, fixed by rigorous definition; and *God* being identified with either, and then persistently used all through, as the most convenient term of comparison for the erroneous beliefs which he wishes to expose.

All these terms he takes up at first as if they were well understood and needed no definition. 'God' denotes the all-perfect Being, the sum total of all reality, and as such the Supreme Cause. 'Nature' is the actually realised aggregate of things, considered in distinction from the merely ideal or possible. By 'Substances' he does not at the outset understand an existence more than *relatively* independent: there may be a plurality of them, each infinite and complete itself, and all dependent upon God as their cause, and not therefore carrying existence in their own essence. In this sense it was that he applied the word to extension and thinking, both infinite, each in its own kind, carrying its essence through all its instances, but having nothing in common with any other. The conversion of this relative idea of substance into an absolute, the reduction of the plurality into the unity, was effected by the mediation of the other terms; and especially by the identification of Nature with God.

This identification is preceded in the 'Short Treatise' by so-called proofs of God's existence, which constitute, in truth, not a proof but a definition, attaching existence to His essence; i.e. determining that the word God *shall mean*

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existence as such, shall go as far as existence, and contain nothing that does not exist. We might say that he has an easy task, for he simply *defines God into existence* when he says that His 'essence involves existence.' But, lest we should think this a mere verbal trick, we must remember that to him *Essence* was not simply the meaning of a word, but the real nature of what the word denoted; and that the idea of it in us was the counterpart in thought of that very nature in the field of being; so that the clearness of that idea was the certainty of the essence, and whatever we saw in the one was predicable of the other. Our idea of God is that of infinite being; this then is His essence; and He exists. Another argument is founded on the assumption, universal in his time, that the essences of things have always been, and will always be, without change; but the essence of God is existence; so He has always been, and will always be. To this *à priori* argument he adds an *à posteriori* one, which we have met with in Malebranche; that we have the idea of a being infinite and perfect; but this we could not have through the resources of our finite nature, and from the experience of our finite world; or from any source short of the infinite reality; it is therefore the witness of His existence.

The identity of the Being thus secured for our knowledge with Nature is likewise made out, partly by *à priori* reasoning and partly *à posteriori*. 'Nature,' we have seen, expresses the actual as distinguished from the merely ideal or possible. Now in God's understanding, or the infinite thought, there can be nothing,—whether substance or attribute,—which is not realised; for to the Infinite all is equal, and there can be no cause why He should have created this rather than that; and if you say that He can never create so much but that He might create still more, this is tantamount to affirming that He can never create that which He can create; which is a contradiction. All therefore that is in thought is also in being; and the real is coextensive with the possible; i. e. Nature with God. The *à posteriori*

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confirmation of this is simply an appeal to the observed unity of Nature; which could never constitute a whole, were it a composite of different substances, one unable to produce another or enter into the line of a common history[1].

The conviction thus gained of the unity of nature, and its coalescence with God, renders it impossible to retain the notion of a plurality of substances. Body and mind may be so called, in so far as their modifications form different sets,—love, feeling, will, &c. under the latter; form, size, motion, &c. under the other. But, in relation to the absolute infinitude of Nature or God, the two kinds of infinitude predicable of extension and of thought can only be as modifications of One existence comprehending both[2]. That existence is their *substance*, of which they are attributes; and having the same predicates,—eternal, infinite, uncaused,—already attached to the previous terms, it is the same with Nature and with God.

Of these three equivalents, *Substance* is that which finally assumes the place of Head to the whole system, and which prescribes the language of the dependent metaphysical organism: viz. *Attributes*, the expressed essence of substance; and *Modes*, the variations under which an attribute appears. The word *Nature* is dropped as an exact term. The word *God* is defined by other marks than those chosen for 'substance,' but marks so directly involved in these, that they differ only as property from essence, and give the same *ideatum* under a modified idea. This is true also of a third phrase, which, though previously used, first plays an important part in the 'Ethica;' I mean '*Causa sui*,' which still renders account of itself from the same group of marks, and is therefore only a new name for the same thing. The definitions are as follows:

DEFINITION I.—'By *Causa sui* I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived but as existing.'

[1] De Deo, &c. I. ii. Vol. II. 266–269.
[2] Ibid. I. ii. 1st Dial. Vol. II. 275.

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DEFINITION 3.—'By *Substantia* I understand that which is in itself (*in se*) and conceived by itself (*per se*); i.e. the conception of which needs not, for its formation, the conception of anything else.'

DEFINITION 6.—'By *God* I understand Being absolutely infinite, i.e. Substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes, each expressing an infinite and eternal essence.'

He explains that the phrase 'absolutely infinite' is meant to distinguish from the case of infinitude *sui generis*, which occurs in each one of the attributes, as extension and thinking. Of anything possessing merely this *relative infinitude* you can deny all the attributes but one; of the *absolutely infinite* you can deny none[1].

It must have cost Spinoza something to adopt the phrase '*Causa sui*' for the very first words of his Ethics; unless he had forgotten his own criticism upon it in his early treatise, where the following remark occurs: 'to say that Desire is free is equivalent to saying that this or that appetency is *causa sui*, i.e. that *before it existed, it produced its existence;* which is absurdity itself and impossible[2].' Yet, at the moment of writing this criticism, he can hardly have remembered that he had already, on an earlier page, used the very phrase, of God; defending the *à priori* proof, through His essence, of His existence by the plea, that 'since God is cause of Himself [and things are proved by their cause], it is sufficient that we prove Him through Himself,—a much more valid proof than the *à posteriori*, which usually is effected only through external causes[3].' This oscillation between condemnation and adoption of the phrase finds something like a reconciling medium in another passage, occurring in his *De Intellectus Emendatione*, which supplies at once an equivalent and an apology for the expression: 'Si res *sit in se*, sive, *ut vulgo dicitur*,

[1] Eth. I. Deff. 1, 3, 6.
[2] De Deo, &c. II. xvii. sub fin. Vol. II. 336.
[3] Ibid. I. vii. sub fin. Vol. II. 295.

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causa sui[1].' To convey his idea with readiness, he has to resort to the current vocabulary of philosophy and waive the scruples which at another time it would provoke; but to guard it from misinterpretation he provides it with tantamount words. These words, it will be observed, express *self-existence*, and are identical with the first clause in the definition of 'substance.' *So far*, then, the definitions coincide; or rather, the definition of Substance is itself defined in that of *Causa sui: Substance = id quod in se est = Causa sui = id cujus essentia involvit existentiam.* The second, or *conceptional* clauses, are also equivalent; for *that whose nature cannot be conceived but as existing, is conceived per se;* were it conceived *per aliud*, it would be dependent, and need not be conceived as existing. The first and third definitions therefore cover exactly the same ground. How is the sixth, the definition of God, related to them? They have given the *marks* of the self-existing; this gives the *extent* of the self-existing: they take the self-existing *by itself*, apart from relation to its contents; this takes the self-existing *along with all that follows from it* and expresses it essence. God is the totality of the existence named in the prior definitions, *in se*, therefore, and *substance;* with essence, however, involving not only existence, but also *attributes*, each infinite, like itself, and together constituting several infinitudes *in suo genere*, like the two known to us, extension and thinking. But these 'several' cannot be limited in number; for there is nothing to limit them; not anything from without, for they are the All, with no beyond; not anything from within, for the essence they express is limitless. So the abstract self-existent is enriched in this definition with innumerable attributes, each expressing an eternal and infinite essence. The relation of the attributes *inter se* (or, rather, absence of relation) is explained in the definition of '*Finite:*'

DEFINITION 2.—'That is called *finite of its kind* which can be bounded by another of the same nature: e. g. a

[1] De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 30.

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> Body is said to be finite, because we always conceive of another greater. So a Thought is bounded by another thought. But body is not bounded by thought, or thought by body.'

Each attribute, therefore, as a whole, is unbounded by any other, and they are an aggregate of distinct infinitudes. Though, therefore, you have set up the term Substance to hold them all, they are but *housed and assembled* there, and form no real unity. There is not one of them that can be deduced from the definition of substance, or that, when known, can give the slightest insight into the presence and nature of any other. This becomes clearer when we turn to the definition of 'Attribute,' which is a counterpart of that of Finite:

> DEFINITION 4.—'By *Attribute* I understand that which intellect perceives of Substance as constituting its essence.'

The essence of substance is *self-existence;* therefore *eternity;* for in yet another definition it is said,—

> DEFINITION 8.—'By *Eternity* I understand existence itself, so far as it is conceived to follow necessarily from the object's mere definition.'

Each attribute then expresses, i.e. enables intellect to perceive, an eternal and infinite essence. But no one attribute enables intellect to perceive anything which another does; so that what is perceived, so far as expressed by a second attribute, is different from what was given by the first; and similarly with the third, fourth, &c. to the end of the chapter. The essence expressed, therefore, is new every time; and there are, to intellectual perception, as many essences of Substance as there are attributes. But a plurality of essences is a plurality of things; for each has one and only one; why are there not then many substances? where is the oneness of this heterogeneous multiplicity? by what right do we agglutinate its unrelated members as predicates of a single subject?

This difficulty is not removed by an ingenious proof

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which Spinoza furnishes, that Substance must be One. Existence necessarily follows from the definition of substance. Whatever follows from the definition of a thing belongs entirely to its nature, and is part of the contents of that nature. If of that nature there be seven or eight instances, there must be some *extrinsic* cause for this definite number, neither more nor less; for the definition carries only the nature, irrespective of number. The existence of plural things, therefore, being always caused externally to them, while the existence of substance is intrinsic to its nature as defined, the latter is *not* plural[1]. The only effect of this proof, if we allow its validity, is, that we are required by it to exclude plurality from an object of thought which has been already so described that we can think of it only as a nest of plurality. It is utterly impossible to combine in thought the number of coexisting attributes and the unity of the substance to which they belong. The proof burdens us with a contradiction, be it ever so good.

But it is *not* good; and its failure lies in this; that although the definition of substance provides within itself for the *existence* of substance, and does *not* provide for any numerical determination, neither on that account does it *exclude* such determination, but remains neutral to *one or many*. Definition always gives the *comprehension* of a term, and is silent on its *extension;* but this silence holds no less where the extension is *one* than where it is plural. Do you say that in the latter case we want *a cause* for there being *a plurality* rather than one? I reply, then no less shall we require a cause for there being *one rather than a plurality*. Perhaps you will say, this is supplied by the definition, which 'involves existence;' but it is not so; for the existence of a nature excludes only non-existence, or *none* of it, and is just as compatible with *many of it* as with *one*. For the cause of either fact alike you have to go out beyond the definition or inner elements of the conception; the statistics of reality cannot be extracted from the factors of thought. This

[1] Eth. I. viii. Schol. 2.

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want of a cause, Spinoza tried to satisfy in the case of substance by having recourse to the strange idea of '*Causa sui*,' thinking thus to keep causality at home within the definition, instead of having to seek it out of doors. But if this device will serve the purpose, what is to hinder us from applying it to a number also, and declaring it to be self-determined? In both instances alike what we really do is not to *find a cause* but to *dispense with it*. Moreover, exactly the same reasoning which Spinoza here applies to the numerical predicate of substance would equally hold of *attribute*, viz. that if plural, there must be a cause for each and for the number; yet he seeks for no such cause *ab extra*, and pretends to no deduction of any attribute from the definition of substance. He cannot escape from explaining the number on the plea of its *infinitude;* for the selection of two, as alone relative to us, shows that the infinitude at least *contains* and *distinguishes* definite number, and so falls under his rule and requires its cause. The reference of them all to one substance as their seat is not an adequate cause; for it keeps them all upon a footing, and explains only their *sameness*, or common attributive character, and not their differences *inter se*.

On this question, of the Unity of substance, a correspondence with Huyghens took place in 1666, in which Spinoza replied to his friend's difficulty so nearly in the words of this scholium as to prove that it was already written. Huyghens remained unconvinced by the argument [1]. And it is curious to observe that, eight years later, Spinoza himself takes up the position that the terms *Unus* and *Unicus*, being purely *denotative* and applicable to objects only in their *extension, cannot be predicated of God*, whose *existence is identical with His essence* [2]. This is equivalent to Malebranche's saying, that God is not *a Being*, but *All* being; and goes far to justify Schelling's interpretation [3] of

[1] Epp. XXXIV–XXXVI. [2] Ep. L.
[3] Philosophie der Offenbarung. Sämmtl. Werke, III. 2° Abtheilung, 156, 157.

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the First Definition in its clause, that *Causa sui* 'cannot be conceived but as existing,' viz. that 'existence is its *only* predicate,'—that *it does nothing but exist*;—and not that 'existence is an *inseparable* predicate of it.' A term of this kind, from which all denotation disappears, and in which the connotation (or comprehension) is a solitary idea, is a mere abstraction, calling itself existence, but verging upon Nought.

I have already pointed out the inexact use by Spinoza of the word *Cause*, his resort to the terms 'necessity' and 'causality' as interchangeable, and his failure to distinguish between the *ratio essendi* and the *causa fiendi*. In this feature of his thought we have the key to his phrase *Causa sui*. He assumes as axiomatic the proposition, that 'whatever has no cause of its existence cannot exist[1];' and again, that 'everything which exists must have a cause of its existing, instead of not-existing;' and that 'this cause must be either in its own nature or external to it[2].' If it be found within the nature, then the thing in question '*causes itself*,' and is '*in se*;' if beyond the nature, then the thing is caused by something else, and is '*in alio*.' We are thus thrown at once upon the absurdity, that from within the nature something acts before that nature exists. The axiom is illusory; it is not *existence*, as such, that demands *a cause*, but the *coming into existence* of what did not exist before. The intellectual law of causality is a law for *phenomena*, and not for *entity*; and though we may speak of inward causes, as distinct from foreign agency, we can only mean by them the powers of a nature already there to put forth phenomena new in its history. To apply, therefore, the language of causality to eternal things is to cheat ourselves with distorted formulas that quickly entangle us in contradictions. A *cause* may be eternal, but nothing that *is caused* can be so.

There is, however, another motive assignable for Spinoza's resort to this paradoxical phrase. He had set up God or

[1] De Deo, &c. I. vi. Vol. II. 289. [2] Eth. I. xi. Dem. 2.

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Substance as necessary cause; of what? Of something *outside?* of foreign objects that might have been quite different? Not so; but of properties emerging from their source, just as those of the parabola follow from its definition. It is not of new and unmediated beings arbitrarily invented or cast up that our world consists; but of derivative modifications of one substantive being, along the lines of its two known attributes of extension and thought. The effect is therefore not alien to its cause, but a simple development of it, and still organically belonging to it: that which the substance has produced is but a part of its own history: the effect takes us to no other nature, but retains our contemplation still within the same. This identity or continuity of being between the primary Real Existence and the ultimate phenomenal is strongly marked by saying that what is caused is after all only a form of the cause itself. Both are *Nature* in different aspects; and so, by the phrase *Causa sui*, preparation is made at the outset for the subsequent distinction drawn, between the Natura *Naturans* and Natura *Naturata;* the former denoting 'Substance with such attributes as express an eternal and infinite essence; the latter, all that follows from the necessity of the Divine nature or of one of its attributes, i.e. all modifications of attributes considered as existing in God, and incapable without God of either existing or being conceived[1].' It should be carefully noticed that, in this antithesis, the upper member includes, not merely 'substance,' but the attributes of extension and thinking; and that the lower begins with the phenomena derivative from these. Spinoza takes up the phrase from philosophies already current. The disciples of Aquinas applied the term *Natura naturans* to God[2]. And in a dialogue of Giordano Bruno's, it is so applied by a ridiculous pedant of the peripatetic school, with whom at the same time Form and Matter take the place which Spinoza gives to the two attributes of thinking and extension,—'Form' being

[1] Eth. I. xxix. Schol. [2] De Deo, &c. I. viii. Vol. II. 295, 296.

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glorified as masculine, and 'Matter' abused as feminine. The pedant, attributing all evil to Matter, proves his point by the Fall in Paradise; Form,—that is Adam,—excuses himself to *Natura naturans*,—that is God,—in the words, the woman that thou hast given to be with me,—that is Matter,—she hath deceived me,—that is, is the cause of all my sin[1]. In order to leave the line quite clear between these two provinces of *Natura*, I ought to give the definition of *Mode* which coincides with the range of the second:

> DEFINITION 5.—'By *Mode* I understand the affections of substance, or whatever is inherent in something else, through which it is conceived[2].'

The explanation which has been given of *Causa sui* removes all obscurity from the much agitated proposition, 'God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things[3].' The antithesis of 'Immanens' and 'Transiens' might be interpreted either of *time* or of *position and motion*. Taken in the former sense it would here affirm *constancy* of the Divine causality in distinction from *intermittency*. Taken in the latter, it would predicate *action from within* the All, in contrast with *interposition from without*. The word 'transiens' has fixed attention chiefly on the former; but it is to be rendered not 'transient' in the sense of *temporary*, but '*transitive*,' i.e. passing on to things and off them as objects extrinsic to the agent; and the leading thought undoubtedly is that God's causality is identical with the internal forces of the universe, and beyond them has no station whence it can enter to modify them. This thought itself carries with it, it is true, a time-contrast also; but in a secondary way; and the intention is, to claim both agent and patient in the causal relation as constituting

[1] Von der Ursache, dem Princip und dem Einen, übersetzt von Adolf Lasson. Berl. 1872, p. 97.
[2] Eth. I. Def. 5.
[3] Eth. I. xviii. Comp. Ep. LXXIII: 'Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens, non vero transiens.'

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one and the same organism, comprehended alike under the term God; so that the *causa causati* is *Causa sui*.

§ 6. *Attributes.*

In descending from the 'absolute nature' of Substance to its first manifestations, the 'geometrical method' should lay for us a stepping-stone of deduction from the definition to the essential attributes connected with it by 'inevitable necessity.' Instead of this, it leaves us to find them as we can, empirically, and fit them in, when found, to the theory of the Nature which has them. Picking them up in this way, we might doubt, in each case, whether we had hit upon a mere *properly* derivative from the essence, or upon an attribute immediate to that essence itself. The doubt is removable by a simple rule: if what we have found requires for its definition any generic idea under which it comes, it is a property of something finite; if not, it belongs to the essence of Nature or God[1]. By this test, all the contents of our cognisable world run up to extension and thinking as the two highest genera, neither of which can be resolved into the other or into anything else: they are therefore our immediate expression of the infinite and eternal essence of God. They are not co-ordinate factors, both necessary to constitute that essence; but each expresses that essence, only in a different way, like two definitions of the same thing. And since no being can be without that which is essential to all being (or substance), extension and thinking are predicable of everything: all material objects are animate; and all thinking things are extended; the concomitance between body and idea is universal. And the same is true of all the other attributes which, unknown to us, exist in infinite number in Substance. Yet these co-present attributes in every object have no collateral relations, or anything in common beyond their being all predicable of substance; they are separate and heterogeneous, though parallel. The predicates of

[1] De Deo, &c. I. ii. 2nd Dial. Vol. II. 280, 281.

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substance are thus all *disparate*,—a state of things which contradicts the very idea of a single subject, and resolves it into an aggregate. This flaw in the doctrine is irremediable; for if, in hope of removing it, you allow the attributes to have something in common, you thereby establish them in causal relations, and, being no longer self-existing and self-conceived, they cease to be attributes, and hand over that term to the genus above them.

This disparate character of the attributes issues, in the case of man, in the proposition that 'neither does the body determine the mind to think, nor the mind determine the body to move[1].' It is obvious that, if the two attributes thus lie apart, and conduct their history without regard to each other, the things that are must be entirely strange to the things that are thought, and there can be no guarantee of accord between idea and ideatum, unless there be some special provision instituted for that end. It is in this interest that the law of parallelism is invented; that 'the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things[2].' Thus the intelligible universe reflects the actual, without being caused by it; and actual objects seem to dispose themselves by our will, though determined in quite another sphere; and the correspondency which so exactly mimics causality is our sole security for truth. If you ask Spinoza how he can distinguish between such correspondency and causality, and why he objects to say outright that it is the ideatum which gives the idea, he answers that, if you examine the case, say, of an actual circle and of your idea of a circle, your idea cannot be had except by another mode of thought as its proximate cause (your mind that has it is itself = *the idea* of the body), and that again by another, &c. in infinitum; and the circle cannot be had except by operations in extension, whereby it is drawn; so that, as long as you view the order of nature as a modus of thought, it must be explained by one attribute; and so long as you regard it as a modus of extension, it must be

[1] Eth. III. ii. [2] Ibid. II. vii.

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explained, i.e. find its cause, through another. The obvious objection, that close correspondency between two independent series without causality is an unsolved mystery, Spinoza endeavours to reduce, by insisting that the separate attributes are, after all, but the same thing expressed in two ways; the body and the mind of man, e.g. being a single *res*, appearing now under the aspect of *res extensa*, and now under that of *res cogitans*. In spite of this verbal assertion of identity, it remains, however, impossible to constitute a conceivable unity out of parallel dissimilars.

A further difficulty is forced upon our attention, when we remember the infinite number of attributes, besides those which are accessible to our apprehension. The same law applies to all alike, and must do so, as each is but another aspect of the same reality. For them also, accordingly, it holds, that the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. Though the 'things,' or modifications of the other attributes, are foreign to us, we share the attribute of *Thinking*, and have ideas in order and connection; and since it is not the ideata that give the ideas, but the ideas that give the ideata, why have we no apprehension of these unknown attributes? If there is nothing that fails to be reflected in the order and connection of ideas, the thinking attribute cannot be the associate of extension alone; it must be the *common concomitant of all the attributes:* what hinders it then from telling the tale of each in the audience chamber of all the rest? It is obvious that this law of parallelism, in the very endeavour to balance our two attributes, destroys their equilibrium, and gives an overwhelming preponderance to the thinking attribute; fitting it up, like a polygonoid of innumerable sides, with a reflecting face towards every one of the remaining infinite attributes as well. Modes of extension have their material world; but modes of thought are denizens of all the worlds. These difficulties did not escape the acuteness of Tschirnhausen, who presses Spinoza for some proof that we can apprehend only two of the

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countless attributes, and points out that, if it be true, it is inexplicable. He obtains no satisfactory reply; and apparently produced on Spinoza a stronger impression than he had himself received [1].

No aspect of the doctrine of parallelism is more staggering than its assertion that all bodies are animate. Did Spinoza really believe, we naturally ask, that a nugget or a boulder had an *idea of itself?* Let us consult his own writings. 'There can be nothing in nature,' he says, 'of which there is not, in the soul of that same thing, an idea; and the more or less perfect the thing is, so much the more or less perfect is the union, and the effect of the idea upon the thing or upon God Himself [2].' Again, having laid down the positions, that 'the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body,' and that 'man consists of mind and body,' he adds that these statements are just as true of all other objects as of man; for that 'all individual things are animate, though in different degrees [3].' The difficulty of this surprising doctrine may perhaps be relieved by attention to two considerations: that the 'object' of an idea does not mean 'that which is consciously contemplated in the idea;' and that 'the soul of a thing' is not regarded as localised in the thing. To explain the first of these points it may be useful to recall Hamilton's revival of the Democritic doctrine of Perception, viz. that the sole 'object perceived' is always 'that which is in immediate contact with the organ,' so that 'all the senses are but modifications of touch [4].' Thus interpreted, the object of vision is not the thing of which we gain cognisance by sight, but the ethereal undulations which impinge upon the retina; and if I am ignorant of their existence, I 'immediately perceive' an 'object' of which I am wholly unaware. Nothing can less conduce to precision than thus to confound the '*cause* of perception,' which may be *unperceived*, with the 'object,' which is the *thing perceived.*

[1] Epp. LXIII–LXV. LXX.
[2] De Deo, &c. II. xxii. Vol. II. 351.
[3] Eth. II. xiii. Schol.
[4] Hamilton's Reid, p. 247 B, note.

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The word 'perception' is not a physical term, denoting a particular link in a chain of molecular movements; but a *mental* term, denoting the contents of a self-conscious act; and it must not be sent out to seek its meaning beyond that self-consciousness. Spinoza, however, takes the side of Democritus and Hamilton; with him also 'the object of an idea' is the particular bodily affection (though undeciphered or even unknown by us) on which the idea attends; so that 'the idea of the body' (i.e. the mind), or 'the idea' of a bodily change or process, is not necessarily the thought *of it*, but the thought or feeling *from it* (as the ordinary physiologist would say); *concomitant with it*, as Spinoza would rather have it. It is indeed *possible* for the *cause, or occasion*, of perception, to be also the thing perceived[1]; and in that case the two meanings of the word 'idea' would coalesce; but it makes no difference to Spinoza whether they do or do not; the *idea* or *soul* of a thing is any conscious state that may attend its presence or its changes. While calling Democritus' doctrine in aid as an illustration, I ought, however, to point out two minor particulars in which the analogy fails. The Greek philosopher placed the 'object' of perception in the last link of change outside the organ; Spinoza, in the molecular movements within the organism itself; and while the former treated the relations between the material and the mental phenomenon as one of causality, the latter reduced it to one of correspondency.

Next consider that, when once the attributes of thinking and extension have parted company with each other, and stand in no relations but that of *Time* correspondency, there is no longer any meaning in the questions, '*Where* is the idea or soul of a material object? Is it *in the thing?*

[1] The late Professor T. H. Green held 'that the exciting cause, the stimulant, of the sensation involved in a perception, is *never* the object perceived in a perception.' He overlooked perhaps the case of direct physiological experiments, like those of Fechner, Helmholtz, Wundt, and other writers on Psychophysik. See his admirable criticism of Lewes and Mill in his Prolegomena to Ethics, Bk. I. ch. ii. § 60 seqq.

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What *sign* does the thing give of such a possession?' All that Spinoza affirms is that the thing has not only a material but also an ideal existence; that it has a place and function, as in a system of extension, so in a system of thought, and can no more be excluded from the organism of intelligence than from the equilibrium of bodies. For this position it suffices that the object be a *thinkable* or *intelligible* thing: of course, it cannot itself, as a material individual, be *intelligent*, so as to understand itself; for it belongs to the other attribute, which has no ideas. If you still press the enquiry for the thinking subject, the answer must be given in Spinoza's statement, 'There is in Nature only a single thinking thing, which is expressed in an infinitude of ideas corresponding to the infinitude of things that are in Nature[1].' Provided, therefore, that within this single *res cogitans* an idea arises answering to the thing of which we speak, the condition of correspondency is fulfilled, and it has gained its soul. Thought, thinker, thinkable, are all 'ideas,' and fall together under the category of the *res cogitans*, and the margins melt away which separate them.

An attempt has been made to rescue the doctrine of disparate attributes from its difficulties by withdrawing them altogether from substantive reality, and treating them as mere subjective forms of conception on our part. And at first sight the attempt seems to be favoured by the definition of attribute, viz. 'that which *the intellect perceives* of substance as constituting its essence;' which might be taken to mean 'that which we *think on to substance*, as its expression relatively to us.' If only this were intended, the failure of unity in the essence of 'Substantia' would be our error instead of its fault, a mere illusion of human imperfection. Erdmann defends Spinoza by this interpretation. But it is irreconcilable with his habitual language, which distinctly plants the attributes in the *real essence* of things themselves; e.g. 'the more reality or existence anything has, the more attributes are predicable of it; the more attributes I

[1] De Deo, &c. II. xx. Vol. II. 348.

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predicate of a thing, the more existence I predicate of it, i.e. the more do I conceive of it as real (*sub ratione veri*)[1];' nay, he speaks, *totidem verbis*, of the attributes of substance as being '*extra intellectum*;' 'there is nothing outside the intellect by which to distinguish a plurality of things among themselves, except substance, or, *what is the same thing, their attributes* and affections.' Here the attributes are not only placed beyond the intellect, but are actually pronounced to be the same thing with substance, i.e. reality itself[2]. And in truth the definition itself, which has suggested the subjective interpretation, goes really against it; for it speaks not of what the mind *assigns to substance*, but of what intellect '*perceives of substance*,' a phrase which Spinoza never uses except of *true* apprehension. Still further evidence is afforded by the obvious meaning of the word 'intellect' in the definition. Does it here denote our human mind? If it did, there would be no attributes except *extension and thinking*, for they are all that our mind perceives as constituting the essence of substance. Spinoza is defining *Attribute in general*, and for him there is an infinite number of them: the 'intellect,' therefore, of which he speaks as perceiving them must be taken in a sense large enough for them all to reach; in other words, must be '*infinite intellect*;'—a phrase which, accordingly, is in frequent use with him. It denotes no actual mind, of an individual or of a race, but a *hypothetical thinking power*, before which comes as object some reality he is discussing. This meaning betrays itself, for example, in the form of phrase 'Omnia quæ sub intellectum infinitum cadere *possunt*.' Had he been thinking here of the *intellect of God* (to whom, as we shall see, he denies intellect), he would not have said *can* fall,—as if there could be an alternative, of their *not* falling,—but, categorically, *do* fall. He is putting an imaginary case, of all things which might fall under an intelligence, or an aggregate of intelligences, like yours or mine, only clear and adequate by removal of bounds[3].

[1] Ep. IX. [2] Eth. I. iv. Dem. [3] Ibid. I. xvi. Dem.

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It must be carefully remembered that the 'thinking attribute' which Spinoza assigns to substance involves no *self-consciousness or understanding*. Intelligence, i.e. thinking through ideas, in which for the first time self-consciousness appears, is distinctly affirmed to be absent from the Natura *naturans*, and to belong exclusively to Natura *naturata*, like will, desire, love, &c.: it is only a particular sort of thinking, one among many, into which the attribute opens out; and the attribute itself, absolutely taken, is but the common ground or prior possibility of them all[1]. It is the basis in Nature for all that becomes self-conscious mind in finite beings. As extension is the *presupposition* of body, so is thinking (or *ideation*) of mind; but it would be as improper, in virtue of this presupposition, to ascribe Body to God or Substance, as to ascribe Mind. He (or It) has neither intellect nor will, except in the natures of dependent creatures[2]. 'Understanding and will belong in every form,' says Camerer, 'to the produced and not the producing nature; in the latter, according to Spinoza, there is no sort of knowing or willing, but only power without consciousness, although such a power as generates consciousness;—a power which acts exclusively by the law, of realising everything which it potentially includes[3].' Thus we are naturally handed over from the doctrine of attributes to the doctrine of

§ 7. *Modes.*

The word 'Mode' (in the sense of 'modification'), already familiar to us in the writings of Descartes and Malebranche, is older than '*attribute*,' and came into use as the correlative of '*substance*.' 'Substance and its modes' was an exhaustive classification of things; and in Spinoza's 'Short Treatise' 'extension and thinking' are called '*modes*' of 'substance;' just as willing, feeling, loving, &c. are modes of thinking. Nor did the interposition of the intermediate conception of attribute ever displace this bifurcate arrangement, which

[1] Eth. I. xxxi.
[2] Ibid. I. xxxii. Cor. 2. Comp. Epp. IX. LIV.
[3] Die Lehre Spinoza's, von Theodor Camerer, p. 16.

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indeed reappears even in the definition (already cited) of 'mode,' where it is said, 'Substance and modes make up all that exists.' It seems at first strange that, after introducing the subaltern genus, attribute, Spinoza should revert to the practice of referring its species to the highest genus. The reason is, that of no attribute do the modes ever constitute *individual things*, but only their qualities or phenomena; e.g. *shape and motion*, of extension, *perception and reasoning*, of thinking; so that the things themselves, combining both within their essence, cannot be ranged under either, but only under substance, which also has them both. The other mark which the definition affixes upon 'mode,' viz. that it is not conceivable *in se* but *in alio*, places it, however, in direct relation to attribute, as the genus by which it is understood; extension, for example, being the *aliud* in which *shape* lies; and thinking, the *aliud* on which perception introduces its differentia. Observe also that, when you pair together 'substance and modes,' the relation between the members is not the same as between the two members of the other pair, 'attribute and modes.' In the latter case, it is *of the attribute* that the modes are varieties; in the former, it is *not of substance* that the modes are varieties: you can predicate *thinking* of perception, you can predicate *extension* of shape; but you cannot predicate *substance* of man. He is a mode of each of its attributes, and not of itself; so that, after all, you cannot tack on the word 'modes' immediately to 'substance,' without a *subauditur* of attribute to complete the meaning of the phrase.

In descending from substance to attribute we have not yet quitted the region of the eternal and infinite. And since out of the eternal and infinite nothing can follow by necessity of nature except what is eternal and infinite, the modes deduced from the nature of extension and thinking must no less be eternal than the properties which are involved in the essence of a geometrical figure. The same principle, however, must hold, it would seem, at the next step of reasoning; so that the sub-deducible still detains us among eternal

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things, only now *mediated* by the first derivatives, instead of being *immediately* dependent on the attribute. Spinoza accordingly establishes a class of *Eternal Modes*, which he thus divides into *immediate and mediate*[1]; and the difficulty is to see how, by 'geometrically' working down the line of 'necessity,' he can ever alight upon anything else, and make acquaintance with any finite and perishable nature. Reserving this difficulty for the present, let us say that what he gets by successive evolution from the absolute nature of an attribute, through its chain of deducibles, is the *essences* of things, such as they might be preconceived by a reasoning mind, and *not* their *existence;* just as the properties of a parabola could be elicited from its equation, whether or not the figure was ever drawn. He did not depart from the received doctrine, that the essences of things were eternal; only, instead of supposing them due to creative invention and separate acts of will, he conceived of them as necessitated links issuing in irreversible order out of the primary data or absolute essence of nature.

When pressed for explanatory examples of his 'eternal modes,' immediate and mediate, Spinoza gives but a curt and obscure answer. Immediate to the attribute of *extension*, he names *Motion and Rest;* to the attribute of *thinking*, *absolutely infinite Understanding*. And as a *mediate* eternal mode, under the head of extension, he gives the 'aspect of the whole universe' (*facies totius universi*), which, though varied in infinite ways, yet remains always the same. In this last instance he apparently means that, conformably with the laws of motion, no internal changes of position in the parts of a body affect the equilibrium of the whole[2]. The two *immediates*, Motion and Understanding, which he here gives only as samples of the first rank of eternal modes, are, in his 'Short Treatise,' expressly mentioned as the *only ones;* and his language in regard to them is very remarkable: 'of

[1] Eth. I. xxi–xxiii.

[2] Ep. LXIV. Comp. Eth. II. Lemma vii. Scholium following Prop. xiii.

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modes immediately dependent upon God we know but two, Motion in matter, and Understanding in *res cogitans*. Of them we say that they have been from all eternity and will remain unchanged to all eternity; truly a work so great as to be worthy of the greatness of its Master.' With still wider departure from his usual way of speech, he adds that, on the one hand, Motion, depending upon the attribute of *extension*, and, on the other hand, Understanding, depending on the attribute of *thinking*, is '*a Son* of God,' in the sense of 'a creature or immediate product,' eternally proceeding and eternally unchanged [1]. Perhaps we have here a key to a wonderful passage of self-defence (in reference to the Incarnation) which occurs in a letter to Oldenburg, as follows: 'to declare my mind more clearly, I say that it is not at all necessary *ad salutem* to know Christ after the flesh; but with regard to that eternal Son of God, i.e. the eternal wisdom of God which has manifested itself in all things, and especially in the human mind, and most of all in Jesus Christ, it is far otherwise. For without this no one can attain to a state of blessedness, seeing that this alone tells what is true and false, good and evil [2].' The real drift of this language, when accurately estimated, is simply the following: well-being depends on discriminating true from false, i.e. on understanding; of understanding Jesus is to us the highest example in the individual, and human nature in the race, though everything has place in an intelligible order; if we call this 'the wisdom of God,' it is not that God has or is understanding, but that it is *a product of God*, inasmuch as the thinking attribute in Him, i.e. in the nature of things, is its prerequisite condition. It is perfectly obvious, from the parallel case of *Motion*, that the intellectual life enters only at the secondary stage; as extension is the condition of motion, and yet is short of it, so is the thinking attribute in need of a differentia before it can become *intellectus*.

If this sort of process could be indefinitely continued, of

[1] De Deo, &c. I. ix. Vol. II. 296, 297. [2] Ep. LXXIII.

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stepping down from primordial attributes, through all the successive derivative cases of them, till their most specific expressions and combinations were reached, there would at last be assembled before us all the *essences of things*, whether as yet they had phenomenal existence or not. We should know all *natures*, considered as *eternal* objects of thought, and see them as mediate, and ever more mediate, modes of their first sources; whether they were only a *thought scheme*, or were exemplified in instances more or fewer, here or there, our inference would not inform us. In assuming such hypothesis of deduction for the purpose of exposition, I do not concede it: it is impossible to overlook the fallacy pervading Spinoza's 'geometrical' descent from an 'absolute' nature of widest sweep to the natures near the terminus of derivation. It is a descent throughout from the more general to the more particular; and of the latter he can render no account *out of the general alone:* he must take on a differentia in order to construct a species out of a genus; and his 'inevitable Necessity' will be at fault for new essences, unless he can open out for it some unworked mine of differentiation. Waiving this, however, I turn now to another question: 'How are we to pass from the "eternal modes" hitherto noticed to "*Finite* modes" and "concrete things?" Supposing the ideal essence of the vaccine nature to be eternally set up, still how will you get it on four legs, with a maid to milk it before breakfast?' This brings us to one of the hinge-points in Spinoza's theory,—the origination of single things from 'the necessity of the Divine nature.' He admits that the essence of these things, which follows from the supreme essence, does not involve existence [1]; that the Supreme essence *does*, and in fact is identical with existence [2]. How, from the absolute essence of existence, something should necessarily follow which does *not* carry existence, is sufficiently difficult to conceive; and the difficulty is increased when we are told that, somehow else than through His absolute essence, God *does* cause the existence

[1] Eth. I. xxiv. [2] Ibid. I. xx.

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of single things[1]. He is the causa *essendi* from His essence, or, which is the same, the essence of some attribute; He is the causa *fiendi*,—from what? what else is there, when you have reckoned with the essence, with its involution of existence, and not found what you want? If the highest essence can and must distribute itself into subaltern essences, why not the highest existence, which is inseparable from it? Else, God being cause of both, the two inseparables part company at the first step of His causality, and proceed thenceforth on different lines. The answer to this riddle is curious. The 'existence' of which you want an account is of *single* things, i.e. of determinate or limited things: *that*, however, is *partial non-existence*, an exclusion from more than a trifling residue of being. Finiteness consists in a series of privations, a boundary of *time*, a restriction of *place*, a check to *action*, a narrowed horizon of *knowledge*[2]. And when you ask for the cause of an object under such conditions, you really ask two questions; what causes the survival of some existence? and what causes the negation of the rest? The former, i.e. the essence of each nature so far as it is expressed, may be set down as a development of the supreme essence, of which in truth it is but a part. If it had its way, it would be eternal as its source; and it actually does persist, in spite of mortal conditions, through the generations of each living kind. But when you quit this side of the *positive* being, and seek an explanation of the negative characteristics or individuality, you find the limitation caused by the presence *of another nature of the same kind* which *bounds* the former and renders it determinate. No attribute has any barrier to fear from another: extension and thought keep each its own infinitude. But one thought takes its beginning from another, and comes to an end with another; and one measure of extension is inclosed by another; and the imposition of these *confines*

[1] Eth. I. xxv. Cor.
[2] Epp. XXXIV. XXXVI; Eth. II. ix. xxxi. Cor. III. Def. 2. Prop. i. iii. with Schol.

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upon the eternal continuum of each attribute is not from its essence, but *ab extra*, i. e. from a homogeneous piece of attribute adjacent. How the attribute comes to be thus cut into lengths not inherent in its nature, how the derivative essences are on terms to press against each other and mutually prevent a portion of existence, how things wholly made up of timeless attributes[1] can become phenomenal;—in short, how from the infinite there springs a finite, remains unexplained. Once possessed of a few finites, you may see your way to plenty more; but they must be taken as fresh data; for, elicited from the definitions of the supreme cause they cannot be. They institute a *new kind of causality*, other than that by which property depends on essence, viz. that by which *thing comes from thing;* they institute a *new kind of infinitude*, other than that of immutable reality, viz. that of *unbeginning and unending series;* they institute a *new order of nature*, other than the order of rational necessity calculating from the dual attributes, viz. an order of scientific experience, spreading a network of *successional connection* through all dimensions of the world. This great innovation, in which Spinoza rushes from his *à priori* cave and makes off with the clothes of the inductive observers while they are bathing, is introduced in Eth. I. xxviii, which runs thus: 'No single thing, i.e. having a finite and determinate existence, can exist and be determined to act, unless determined thereto by some other cause, also having a finite and determinate existence; which again cannot exist and act, unless determined thereto by some other finite and determinate cause, and so on in infinitum.' The 'proof' which he gives of this proposition is merely negative, viz. that from the absolute nature of God nothing but the infinite can come; so that in order to produce the finite, that nature must be *modified into some finite* form, i.e. must act in a finite object. Or, as he is fond of expressing it, the particular thing is 'caused by God, *not as infinite*, but *as affected in the mode of an actually existing particular thing;*

[1] Eth. I. xxv. Cor.

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of which also he is the cause, not as infinite, but as affected by a third[1],' &c. I call this proof '*negative*,' because all that it establishes is, the impossibility of extracting the finite from the infinite; but though it thus creates the *want* of finite causes, if we are to elicit finite effects, it does not help us to get them. It tells us that the limitation or imperfection of objects comes, not from within their essence, but from without: yet, what is there without? nothing but *other essences*, equally derived from the essence of the same attribute, and claiming in like manner to be its property; and how then can these coexisting properties of one nature, without which surely that nature would be imperfect, clash with one another and weaken its perfection? Spinoza, therefore, does not effect the transition, but makes the leap, from his infinite to his phenomenal causality, and sets up, as an assumption from experience, the consecutive action of particular objects in perpetual series. In other words, he supplements the logical evolution of natures by the causal nexus of existences; and, without noticing their distinction, calls them both 'necessity of nature,' and identifies them both with *potentia*, though the one is an immanent cogency of thought, and the other a dynamic efficiency of being.

The general result of this new turn of doctrine is, that in every finite thing two elements or *momenta* are united, an eternal and a transitory, viz. its *essence* expressing a modified attribute; and the conditions partially suppressing that essence, and subjecting it to limitations of time, place, and energy, and translating its proper 'eternity' into infinite succession. These two, treated as inner and outer causality, play a most important part in the ulterior psychology and ethics of Spinoza. The former, the inherent power of our essence, passes into the active effort of reason to assert itself in us and through us; the latter, the controlling power of the world's external order, flings upon us all that we have to feel, imagine, and suffer: the one, the free play

[1] Eth. II. ix. where, however, the language is employed within the attribute of *Thinking*, instead of *Extension*. Comp. I. xxviii. Schol.

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of our proper nature; the other, the restrictive mechanism of nature beyond us. In the self-liberation of the former from the operation of the latter is summed up the perfection both of intellect and character.

Man.

It would be interesting, if it were not too discursive, to follow Spinoza over the new field thus opened up by the causal nexus among finite things. His account of the dependence of link on link of objects in succession; of simple bodies, that have no properties but motion and rest; of compounds, rendered hard or fluid by molecular arrangement; of the laws of motion and equilibrium; constitutes a doctrine of Physics which, though obsolete even in his own time, is historically curious as a remnant of *à priori* interpretation of nature. But I must be content with putting on record a single important assumption, which lies at the base of his theory of external causality; viz. the following: 'That which has nothing in common with another thing cannot be the cause of that other thing's existence[1].' Twice he repeats this position in his correspondence[2]; supporting it in one instance by the reason that 'if the effect had nothing in common with the cause, all that the effect had would come from nothing[3].' Not only is this community essential to the relation of cause and effect, it is the *sole* essential; 'to have community with other things is to be produced by them, or to produce them[4].' It is in this character, viz. as *identical with the common properties of all that exists*, that God is called *the cause of all;* that every idea of a particular thing is said to involve His eternal and infinite essence; and that all men are declared to have adequate knowledge of that eternal and infinite essence[5]. What is common to

[1] De Deo, &c. Appendix, Axiom 5.
[2] Ep. III. where Oldenburg quotes it from a previous letter, Sept. 27, 1661.
[3] Ep. IV. [4] De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 14, Adnot.
[5] Eth. II. xlv. xlvi. xlvii. and Schol.

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all exists in each; and any one thing is sufficient to reveal it. The thing known introduces you to extension; and the knowing introduces you to thinking; and these two give the eternal and infinite essence of God. Thus the causality of God is resolved into the interaction of the homogeneous properties of things.

Man, however, is the only finite object in which we can study with direct insight the interplay of the two causalities,—the energy of the inner essence, and its subjection to external counteraction; and Spinoza's anthropological doctrine claims attention as the real source and centre, though not the professed initiative, of his whole philosophy. In our own mixed nature we have both extension and thinking at home with us; and here it is that we catch their relation in its elementary form. I have already mentioned the position which sounds to us so strange, that 'the idea which constitutes the human mind is the idea of the human body, i.e. a definite mode of extension in actual existence[1];' and by 'idea' he means 'the first, immediate modification of thinking, from which all the rest, love, desire, pleasure, &c. are derived[2].' This idea, however, though 'immediate,' 'is not simple, but composed of very many ideas;' for the body is very complex, and subject to be sensibly affected in all its constituent parts; and the sum of all these modifications of feeling makes up the idea of the body[3]. The true key to these statements is found when for 'idea of the body' we substitute, as before suggested, '*idea* FROM *the body*,' i.e. the conscious state arising on occasion of a corporeal change,—a state which Spinoza habitually, but erroneously, treats as if it were equivalent to *a knowledge* of the corresponding change. He began, I am convinced, by regarding the body as the *source* of the mind; starting the mind, after the method of the empirical psychology, with the sensible affections directly due to bodily phenomena; holding to the rules, that we know only what we feel; that we feel only

[1] Eth. III. xiii.
[2] De Deo, &c. Appendix, Vol. II. 367.
[3] Ibid. II. xv.

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the changes in our organism; and that we cannot feel without knowing what we feel. Thus assumed and interpreted, the *causality* of the body was to him, as to Democritus, the *objectivity* of the body,—not only the condition of perception, but the thing perceived. And if you ask 'perceived by what?' he will not allow you any *percipient* ready to become the subject of the idea, or at all distinct from the idea itself. He does not say that the mind *gets the idea*, but that the idea *is the mind*,—the first rudiment that constitutes it; the word 'mind' being only a shorthand abstract for the total cumulus of ideas. He identifies the Ego with its phenomena; he begins these phenomena with a *cognition*, and makes the object of that cognition the human body,—a thing in the sphere of *extension*, not a phenomenon in the sphere of thought. This *objectivity* of body, which originally slipped in under shelter of its causality, he still retained after he had severed the tie of dependence and interaction between the two attributes; and though he no longer supposed that the idea of a body was the effect of that body, and so had something in common with it, he did not cease to treat it *as knowledge* of the body, i.e. as the *presence in thought* of *the essence of the thing*. It does not seem to strike him that, in the absence of causation, it is incumbent on him to explain how we can be sure of agreement between idea and ideatum, belonging as they do to spheres incapable of communication. The essence, as thought, is known to us only as *contained in an idea*, i.e. within the thinking attribute, and *not as in extension*, which is its own; and if, as an ideal phenomenon, it needs a prior within the same attribute, and so on, we are set upon an infinite regress, without ever escaping from the world of thought. He gives us no help over the chasm which thus distances us from reality; but assumes the world of things, beginning with our own body, as a *given object*, i.e. as the same for us that it is in itself. Truth, it is expressly said, is simply 'to have the essence of a thing present to the mind as an object of thought,'—'habere essentias rerum objectivas;'

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and this, he says, is 'the same thing as to have ideas,'—'aut, quod idem est, ideas habere;' so that, in virtue of this assumption of correspondency or identity of essence, he can predicate about both spheres at once; notwithstanding his statement, apparently on the other side, that 'Idea vera est diversum quid a suo ideato[1].'

Our idea of an object then authenticates itself, and is to be believed on its own word. But further; this idea of a reality is itself a new reality or experienced phenomenon, which, in its turn, becomes an object of thought; for we cannot know without knowing that we know; it belongs to the very nature of an idea that whoever has it is aware that he has it. There arises, therefore, of necessity an *idea of the idea* (idea ideæ), which again is a new fact or modification in the thinking attribute, and must have its corresponding idea, liable in its turn to fall into the *ordo rerum* and have its counterpart in the *ordo idearum;* and so on, in infinitum[2]. This infinite series, however, does not make itself up in discrete parts that can be counted in succession; being only a reduplicated reflection of the same reflection, its self-similars fuse themselves together and coalesce into *one continuum of self-consciousness.* This 'knowledge of the human mind,' i.e. of 'the order and connection of ideas corresponding to those of things,' is 'united with the mind as the mind is united with the body[3];' an expression which is intended to attach self-consciousness to idea as inseparably as idea to thing; but which is not quite exact in its comparison of relations; inasmuch as both idea and the knowledge of it are within the same attribute of thinking, while mind and body belong to the different attributes of thinking and extension: the union is causal in the one case, it is a correspondency in the other. This curious theory of self-consciousness really means, that it is made up by adding all the items of idea, with the running accompaniment of their being known as soon as they are had;

[1] De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 11. [2] Eth. II. xx.
[3] Eth. II. xxi. and Schol.

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merely to be conscious of a bodily affection would not constitute knowledge *of the mind*, did it not involve further our making the idea of it *our object*, and repeating that process indefinitely and identically with every idea, a continuous thread through all successions; the 'mind' is nothing but the ideas, as far as they have gone, unified by the invariable recurrence of the same *knowledge of them*. Consciousness, which begins with an affection of the organism, necessarily involves self-consciousness, which is knowledge of the mind [1]. We have here, in subtle and obscure form, an anticipation, not perhaps without influence from Hobbes, of the doctrine of Condillac and James Mill. The theory, although professedly founded on the exact parallelism between the two attributes, really contradicts it twice over; and *that* in contradictory ways. On the one hand, by making the union between the body and its idea identical with that between that idea and its reflection in self-consciousness, Spinoza treats the relation as alike causal in both cases, and, with the empirical psychologists, regards the body as answerable for the idea; so that the thinking mode surrenders its pretensions to the extended. On the other hand, when, forgetting this, he takes the two attributes as parallel, they are already brought to equipoise as soon as for every extended object he has provided an answering idea; this done, the *ordo idearum* and the *ordo rerum* sway the universe as two consuls differing neither in term nor right. But when he adds that, over and above this, each idea is the object of another, and each other of a third, &c. to infinitude, so that all the modes of thinking are, through self-contemplation, boundlessly prolific of further thoughts, it is obvious that he indefinitely multiplies the phenomena of the ideal attribute as compared with the extended, and raises the nominal colleague into the Dictator. And so it is that the scheme leans over, according to the needs of the context, now to the materialistic, and now to the idealistic side.

[1] Eth II. xxii. xxiii.

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§ 8. *Gradations of Knowing.*

The composite nature of man prevents him from being either a mere physical automaton, or a mere logical instrument; and renders him the subject of certain mixed states in which the mechanism of the world, playing upon his own, affects him with sensitive conditions disturbing to his clearness of thinking. The hindrances to adequate knowledge of finite things are various. Knowledge of an effect depends upon knowledge of its cause: in the case of an eternal truth or mode, as of a geometrical property, this can be had; we know the essence which yields a property, the attribute which yields the mode: here the causality is of the immanent kind. But a finite thing is turned up, not by its essence, but by a prior thing in the order of phenomena, which is again predetermined by another, &c.; and we can never know its total cause which thus retreats out of reach into infinity[1]. So is it with the human body, the base of all our ideas: we know it, not in its cause, or in itself as a unitary nature, but only through ideas of particular successive states through which it passes: each of these has its concomitant idea; and the sum of these items is all we know about the body[2]. There is a further source of imperfection. These corporeal affections themselves arise from two factors, viz. the constitution of our own body, and the operation of other bodies; and in the answer of our consciousness to their relation, their respective functions are not disentangled, but the natures of both are confusedly rolled up together[3]. The *existence* indeed of foreign bodies we learn from their presence affecting our own; else they would have no being relatively to us; but what share they have with us in the joint effect, that effect does not report in its idea. And, once more, the mind's self-knowledge necessarily comes in for the same imperfection; for it is only

[1] Eth. II. ix. and Cor. xii. I. Ax. 4. [2] Ibid. II. xix.
[3] Ibid. II. xvi.

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the knowledge of this identical imperfect knowledge,—the ideas of the bodily states reflected in consciousness[1]. Under these manifold limitations, the first and lowest order of ideas which we gain may be appropriately called

IMAGINATION.—Under this term Spinoza includes memory and perception, as well as the ideal representation to which it is usually restricted; classing them together in virtue of a physiological theory common to them all, and originally expressed in terms of the 'animal spirits.' In acting upon an organ of sense, an external body impels the nervous fluids upon the brain, and by their pressure alters the configuration of its local surface; and each variety of such change has its special concomitant idea; which is called an '*image*,' not from any supposed *resemblance* to the external object, but from its attending on a physical *vestige* of the object's action on the brain. The characteristic of such image is that it *objectifies* the external body and gives it to us as *present*; the *vestige* is in the sphere of extension; the *image*, in the sphere of thought[2]. But next, it may happen that the fluids, once having learned the way, may, from lighter hint than the outward object, repeat their pressure and imitate the vestige; the image will then recur, and give a quasi-presence to a really absent thing,—*representation* in place of *presentation*,—or, if recognised as such and distinguished from its original,—*memory as well*[3]. This order of ideas is necessarily confused and inadequate[4]. It is a *passivity* put upon us, not an action of the mind's essence[5]. It 'expresses the present condition of the human body (though confusedly) more than that of the external body[6];' yet, giving the latter *as present*, induces us to plant out into it as qualities the warmth, the smell, the beauty, &c. which are in our own feeling; and so it refers us to two related terms,—our own body and the foreign body,—

[1] Eth. II. xxiii. xxviii. Schol. xxix. and Cor.
[2] Ibid. II. xvii. Cor. and Schol.
[3] Ibid. II. xviii.
[4] Ibid. II. xxviii.
[5] Ibid. III. Def. 2. IV. ii. De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 8.
[6] Ibid. II. xvi. Cor. 2. IV. i. I. App. Vol. I. p. 74.

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without an account of their relation, and still less with any apprehension of either beyond the limits of this one relation.

The images thus supplied are susceptible of both composition and resolution, which yield innumerable new products, none of which escape the imperfections of their source. Mere empirical concurrence of integral images will make them cling together and form an artificial whole [1]. And in tracing the transformations effected by '*the association of ideas*' Spinoza is not behind Hobbes in psychological ingenuity. Unlike the later expositors of the process, he treats it chiefly as the source of illusions. And it is in a similar spirit of detection that he follows out the opposite process of *dis*sociation of ideas, by which integral representations are shaken to pieces by recurrence under variation, so as to crowd out and drop the shifting features, and retain only the elements that never change or fail, in the shape of common concepts and abstract notions. These are nothing but mutilated images, to which no reality corresponds, though the words which hold them,—e.g. 'thing,' 'being,' or 'beauty,' 'power,' 'humanity,' are apt to impose upon us a belief in their objective significance [2]. And so are innumerable associated images mere accidental agglutinations, giving no clue to any relations of cause and effect, yet taking our thought captive to their connection and disabling us from holding them apart. All existences are in reality *necessary;* either from their *essence*, so as to be 'eternal;' or from the *nexus naturæ*, so as to be finite and phenomenal. In the latter case, we are often aware of their finiteness, but ignorant of the causes which determine their various limits; so that we have to discriminate these varieties by names in the dark; marking the relative extent to which they fail of existence, the relative order of the several defects, and the relative degree of our ignorance about them. For the purpose of such distinctions it is that we resort to the ideas

[1] Eth. II. xviii. xliv. Schol. [2] Ibid. II. xl. Schol. I. 2.

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of *Duration*, to denote less or more privation of existence [1]; of *Time*, to denote this or that position in the series of existence; *Contingency*, to denote the doubts about existence which our blindness involves [2]; *Freedom*, to denote our unhindered pursuit of an end, while unconscious of what determines us towards it [3]. All these terms form a vocabulary, not of knowledge, but of *negation of knowledge*: they are all devices of imagination, for picturing to ourselves the vacancies in our system of ideas, the subjective feelings which fill the gaps of real apprehension. But we use them just as we do the language of reality, and become unconscious of the difference; and so come to attribute contingency to events, and freedom to beings, as inherent qualities; and to conceive of duration and time, not simply as subjective measures, but as entities measured. Hence, these ideas of imagination are a confused medley of true and false thought, and the copious fountain of illusion. In themselves, if simply taken for what they are, they practise no deception: they also are facts, with something corresponding to them in the field of extension; and to have them is not to be in error. But they are not knowledge; and when taken for it they pass into falsity.

With this '*Cognitio primi generis*' Spinoza takes leave of the province of 'confused and inadequate ideas,' and under the names *Ratio* and *Intuitus* passes to the second and the third, where all is 'clear and adequate.'

RATIO.—By this term must be understood the process of *legitimate inference, or mediate* attainment of truth, as distinguished from *intuitus*, the *immediate* reading it off by insight. The difference between Ratio and Imagination is best seen by comparing two apparently similar but really contrasted orders of ideas, characteristic of them respectively, viz. notiones *universales*, and notiones *communes*. The former are *class ideas*, or the meaning we connect with common nouns, consisting of a mere blurred

[1] Ep. XII. [2] Eth. II. xliv. Schol. I. xxxiii. Schol. I.
[3] Ibid. I. Append. Vol. I. p. 70.

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and mutilated image of an individual, where it is an accident what may be the surviving and permanent features for you and what for me. Such a term may be a convenient arbitrary sign for referring to any one of a given number of objects; but it corresponds in its contents to neither any imaginative picture nor any real essence. *Notiones communes*, on the other hand, are 'ideas of what all things have in common and what is alike in the part and in the whole;' or, if we are attending to a more restricted world, 'ideas of what the human body has in common with a portion of the bodies external to it, and what is alike in a part of these and in the whole.' Whatever complies with this condition can never be absent, or otherwise than *wholly* present: from experience therefore, though prolonged to infinitude, it has no supplement to receive, but only to undergo perfect repetition. Hence the idea is adequate. Moreover, what is common to the human body and other bodies is not varied by being in both, or adulterated by confusion with a foreign nature, but only extended in range: its idea is consequently clear and distinct in the human mind[1]. Nor does this consideration apply less to such properties as the human body may have in common with only *some* other bodies; because these 'some' might have been all, and are actually all that affect the human body, i.e. that exist for it. It thus appears that, since the area of clear and adequate ideas is coextensive with the properties common to the human body with other bodies, the more the body has in common with other bodies, the more is the mind competent to know[2]. These 'common notions, which unfold the essence of no particular thing,'—are the data whence all reasoning springs,—the '*fundamenta rationis:*' nothing can follow from them but adequate ideas; and to deduce these is the special function of Ratio[3].

From this account it is plain that the highest example of a *communis notio* must be *extension*, as the common essence

[1] Eth. II. xxxviii. [2] Ibid. II. xxxix. and Cor.
[3] Ibid. II. xliv. Cor. 2.

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of all body, and alike in the part and in the whole. It is given in the idea of our own body, which involves that of the attribute under which it comes; and it is identical with the eternal and infinite essence of God. Our own body is the object of the idea which constitutes our mind; all that happens in the object is attended by modification of the mind, i.e. is perceived by the mind: but all that happens in the body is from external bodies, through what they have in common with it; therefore the affection of our body involves the idea of what is common to all bodies: the idea, however, of the common properties of all is the idea of God's eternal and infinite essence; and this idea all men necessarily and adequately have, because they have the idea of their own body, and of its idea, and of external bodies,—all from experience of their corporeal affections [1].

The *notiones communes*, however, which thus arise come from our knowledge, not of the body's phenomenal existence in the order of finite causation, but of its *essence* as necessary, i.e. as belonging, in common with other bodies, to the infinite and eternal attribute of extension. The *Rational* contents of our knowledge of the human body are the common properties of the essences of things, which are unaffected by the *nexus naturæ* and all its determinations. They are deduced from the definition or conception itself, and are always and everywhere predicable, not as what is, but as what must be; and in knowing them as thus necessary, we know them '*sub specie eternitatis*,'—the invariable mark of clear and adequate ideas, and of the *ordo ad intellectum*, as distinguished from the *experientia vaga* of imagination [2]. The difference between the adequate apprehensions which we gain from the common properties of *all bodies*, and those which arise from what is common to our body with only *some* other bodies, is this: that the former constitute the characteristics or universal principles of Reason; the latter constitute the special knowledge of the human affections.

Spinoza has worked out his doctrine of reason less clearly

[1] Eth. II. xlv–xlvii. [2] Ibid. V. xxix.

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and fully than that of imagination. Perhaps the relation between the two is best seen in the light in the following Scholium, introduced by him in quite another connection: 'We conceive of things as *actual* in two ways; in so far as we conceive them to exist in definite relations of time and place; or in so far as we conceive them to be comprised in God and to follow from the necessity of the Divine nature. Things conceived as true or real in this second way we conceive *sub specie eternitatis*, and the ideas of them involve the eternal and infinite essence of God, as shown in II. xlv, the Scholium to which may be consulted[1].' The 'actuals' of the first type are particular things, each taken as a unit made up of many properties; the 'actuals' of the second type are such of those properties as reappear in all, and form each an eternal unit pervading the manifoldness of things. Imagination lives among the former, and sees nothing but the grouping and incidents of the concrete world, and *that*, just as it appears, without analysis, and without detecting its links of succession. Reason lives in the latter, reading the single attribute underlying the multitude of things and presupposed in all, and contemplating it apart till it yields the consequences it necessarily involves; and so, of any other attribute, till the eternal data, with their dependent trains, are assembled in thought, ready to be followed in their distribution through the modes of phenomenal existence.

INTUITUS.—Still more obscure is the account of *Intuitive knowledge*. The name prepares us to meet some mode of apprehension at a glance, in which all *process* is dispensed with and the end is struck by a flash. And this is consistent with a curious statement in which Spinoza seems to attempt some rationale of this third grade of cognition: 'it depends,' he says, 'on the mind itself, as its real (*formalis*) cause, in virtue of the mind itself being eternal; for under the form of eternity the mind conceives nothing except so far as it thus conceives the essence of its own body, i.e. so

[1] Eth. V. xxix. Schol.

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far as it is eternal; and so, *quâ* eternal, it has the knowledge of God,—a knowledge necessarily adequate; therefore the mind, as eternal, is qualified to know whatever follows from this given knowledge of God, i.e. things of the third kind of knowledge[1].' And again, he says, 'the essence of our mind being knowledge, of which God is the principle and foundation, it is clear how our mind depends, essence and existence alike, on God;—an impressive example to show how superior is that knowledge of particular things which, as intuitive, is called of the third kind, to the general knowledge called of the second kind[2].' Through these dark sayings, which can hardly be unintentionally enigmatical, one ray of hope is seen in the epithet (*formalis*) attached to the mind as 'cause' of this particular kind of knowledge. The mind of course is, in some sense, the cause of *all knowledge;* but in other cases it is the receptive or responding condition, i.e. it reflects in itself the nature of the thing known, and makes it an object of thought; *the thing* known is the real or '*formal*' object, and is something *diversum* from the 'idea,' though the latter be true to it. In the present case, this 'diversum quid' disappears; the seat of reality is changed, and is now in the very make and essence of the mind itself; the knowing act and object known are coalescent instead of antithetic. The mind knows the eternal (i.e. *timeless* or *necessary* reality), because it *is* eternal: this knowledge is not a case of the infinite passing over into the grasp of the finite (which might well be deemed impossible), but of the infinite coming home to itself. The mind is the idea of the body's essence; but *that* is extension, which is timeless and necessary; and so is its idea; and this eternity, common to both, finds itself out in the latter; the idea, as a thing, having the same necessity which it perceives in its object. If the mind can predicate eternity of any essence, it is because eternity is its own predicate. And herein it has knowledge, not only of its own body and of itself, but of God; for the eternal part or essences of both

[1] Eth. V. xxxvi Schol. [2] Ibid. V. xxxi.

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are simply modes of His attributes, and are conceivable through them alone; i.e. they are examples of extension and thinking.

This difficult position of Spinoza, that intuitive knowledge has the mind itself for its real cause, may be rendered perhaps more conceivable, if regarded as Kant's doctrine of the subjectivity of space, *taken in reverse.* Ideal space and objective space are the same (Kant teaches), because the latter has no reality beyond the mind: its infinitude, its necessity, are modes of our thinking, not predicates of anything 'extra intellectum;' they pass upon the outer nature because given with the inner; but all the while they have but one seat, viz. in the percipient idea. Now suppose the dualism of knowledge to be similarly reduced to unity, only beginning from the other end of the relation; then the infinity, the necessity, of extension beyond the mind will also form the essential predicates of its idea; they are the common predicates of both worlds: extension is infinite, necessary, eternal; thinking is infinite, necessary, eternal; what necessity or eternity is in the ideatum, *that* is it in the *idea;* but in the ideatum it is real Timelessness; so is it therefore in the idea; which is accordingly qualified to read in the object what is identical in itself. Thus the unification of percipient and perceived leads in one direction to the ideality, in the other to the reality of the infinites given to our thought.

Besides this dependence on the mind itself, intuitive knowledge receives two other marks at Spinoza's hand. It is confined to *single things* (*res singulares*)[1]. And it 'advances from the adequate idea of the real essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things[2].' This last characteristic seems to constitute a *process of deduction,* and therefore to contradict the very idea of *knowledge at a glance.* But the inconsistency is only apparent; for he is describing not simply the contents or features of the third kind of knowledge, but its difference

[1] Eth. V. xxxvi. Schol. [2] Ibid. II. xl. Schol 2.

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from the second; and this it is which consists of '*an advance*' from the general to the particular; in the second, we reason out the consequences of an attribute; in the third we apprehend the essence of a given thing. This he calls '*an advance from*' the former, not because it is gained by way *of inference* from it, but because, being immediate instead of mediate, it is *superior* to it. The other specialty of intuitive knowledge, viz. that it is concerned with 'single things,' does not mean that it apprehends only isolated facts and finite objects among the successions of the world, so as never to apply itself to the necessary and eternal; but only that it sees the necessary and eternal *in the instance*, without requiring to get at it through prior cognisance of the total genus; and indeed leaps to the genus in and through the instance. Thus, you need only have the sample of extension in your own body in order to have, in the idea of it, a knowledge of all extension as infinite and necessary; you do not reason, deductively, from the attribute down to the particular mode; or climb, inductively, from all observed modes to the attribute; but immediately understand the given case as a παράδειγμα embodying the essence of the attribute. Spinoza illustrates this meaning, not very happily, by an example which he gives both in his Short Treatise and in his Ethics; of the different ways in which you may know and use *the rule of three*. You may trust it and apply it from mere authority and custom, in which case your knowledge is only of the first kind, a blind preconception. You may proceed on the strength of Euclid's proof of the common property of proportionals; and then your reckoning is a *deduction*, and your knowledge *rational*, under the second head. Or, on simple inspection of the numbers one, two, three, you may perceive at a glance, without any calculation, that the true fourth is six[1]. It does not seem to occur to Spinoza that, in such instances, the conclusion may be reached by a rapid process of thought,

[1] De Deo, &c II. i. Vol. II. 302; Eth. II. xl. Schol. See also De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 9, where the same example is adduced.

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which only appears to be an *intuitus* because in its fleetness it dispenses with all record by words or symbols: yet, where there are *data* or premisses, it is hardly possible to conceive that they are not *used* in reaching the *quæsitum*; and *if* they are used, it is through their mediation, and *not immediately*, that the truth is gained; just as Newton, in virtue of his swift flight over a long train of mathematical reasoning, seemed to seize without transition the solution of problems which to others cost days and weeks of labour.

Though both the second and the third kinds of knowledge contemplate *real universals*, or *the common properties of all things, or the attributes of God* (which are but different expressions for the same thing), the second contemplates them only in their separation, one by one, and follows them down into the essence of particular things: but as no particular thing is made up of either attribute alone, the constitution of its essence is thus only partially seen, though of its modal relation to the attribute the idea is clear and adequate. The third species of knowledge, on the other hand, contemplates *res singulares*, sees the attributes united in the nature of each, and seizes the whole individual essence which they constitute: the former reads them as two eternals, each *in suo genere*; the latter perceives them as making up *one concrete eternal*. It must be admitted that, after every attempt to penetrate the darkness of Spinoza's intuitive knowledge, it remains very obscure. And, although it is one of the most persistent features of his philosophy, appearing in his first treatise and reappearing in his last fragment, indications are not wanting that he was himself conscious of its defective light. From the supreme place which he assigns to it, both in the intellectual and the affectional excellence of man, we naturally expect to find it invested with some large functions in his mental history. Yet in one of his last pages Spinoza confesses 'that, thus far, the truths which he can assign to this kind of apprehension have been *extremely few* (*perpauca fuerunt*)[1].'

[1] De Intell. Emend. Vol. I. p. 9.

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These two higher stages of cognition together constitute *Intellect*, as distinguished from *Imagination*, to which the first belongs, and to which the fatal disqualification attaches, of having no means of discriminating truth from error. Its mutilated representations, its fictions of abstraction, its combinations thrown together by the accidents of experience, expose us to uncertainty and error; and all the variances of thought among men will be found referable to this head. Agreement begins as soon as you can bring them upon the intellectual ground. And if the question be asked, How then is truth separated from error? Spinoza replies that in the ideas of the understanding there is a power of *Self-verification*, which resolves itself in the last resort into their simple clearness and distinctness in themselves, and their adequacy for the deductive use which is assigned to them[1]. The truth of an idea, i.e. its agreement with its ideatum, may always be known by the special feeling of certainty which attends upon clear and distinct thought, and puts it out of your power to doubt it. Beyond this subjective criterion Spinoza could never be pressed, often as his friends tried to draw from him some common measure that would escape the risks of private interpretation. He thought it sufficient to say, in defence of his position, that a true idea was itself the only possible detector of the false, just as light revealed at once both itself and the darkness which it banished[2].

[1] See Epp. LIX. LX.

[2] Eth. II. xliii. Schol. The passage is so characteristic that I cite it: 'No one who has a true idea is unaware that a true idea involves the highest certainty. For to have a true idea simply means to know a thing perfectly or in the best way; and of this, it must be admitted, no one can be in doubt, unless he takes an idea to be some dumb object like a picture, instead of a mode of thinking, viz. the very act of understanding. And who, I wonder, can know that he understands a thing, without first understanding it? i.e. who can know that he is certain of it, unless he is first certain of it? Besides, what can there be clearer or more certain than a true idea, to serve as a criterion of truth? As light reveals both itself and darkness, so, you must admit, truth is the rule of itself and of the false. This is my answer to the following questions: (1) "If a true idea is distinguished from a false only so far as its alleged agreement with the ideatum is concerned, it has no advantage of reality

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In Spinoza's conception of human nature there is an occasional wavering which has its explanation in the foregoing threefold distribution of ideas. In order to include the whole, the essence of man is said to be *constituted of both adequate and inadequate ideas;* and this account holds of him as he stands in actual experience. But then, so regarded, he is the product of two factors, viz. his inward nature, as a mode of the Divine attributes, and the finite causes external to him, that limit and variously control him. So far as he is subject to the latter, he is under a foreign influence, and is only partially *himself.* And this repressive agency has its field entirely in the imagination and its confused inadequate ideas; so that, after all, this area and its contents appear not properly reckoned as a province of his personality; they

or perfection over a false one" (the distinction being wholly extrinsic), "and consequently a man who has true ideas is no better off than one who has only false ones;" (2) "How comes it that men have false ideas?" (3) and finally, "How can any one know for certain that he has ideas agreeing with the ideata?" These questions I regard as already answered. As for the difference between a true and a false idea, it has been shown in II. xxxv. that the true is related to the false as being to non-being; now the causes of falsity I have most clearly shown in Proposition II. xix.–xxxv. with the Schol. to this last; whence also the difference is made evident between the man who has true ideas and the man who has only false. Then, with regard to the last question, how a man is to know that he has an idea agreeing with the ideatum, I have given proof enough and more than enough, that it is simply *by having an idea agreeing with its ideatum*, i. e. that truth is its own criterion. And besides, our mind, in so far as it apprehends things truly, is part of the infinite intellect of God; so that the mind's clear and distinct ideas are as necessarily true as are the ideas of God.' This last consideration comes in curiously. Besides being at variance with Spinoza's denial of intellect to God, it can receive no meaning which adds anything to the previous reasons. What is 'the infinite intellect of God,' the ideas of which are true with absolute certainty? It is simply that attribute of 'thinking' which is parallel with that of 'extension' in the universe,—the *intelligible* aspect of the *Real* which *is actual and conscious* thought in man, *potential* everywhere; i. e. it is *Reality* turned into *Truth*,—the *Ideal* reflection of *Being;* and to say that its ideas are true with absolute certainty is mere tautology, and no synthetic proposition. And therefore to say that our mind, so far as its ideas are true, is a part of this, is to say that our ideas, so far as they are true, *are true*, or faithfully correspond with their realities, within the sphere of total reality. This relation of the part to the whole gives no new assurance, but merely conveys over into the former *what is assumed* in the definition of the latter.

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belong to the surroundings of his existence, not to the contents of his true essence: if that essence were free to realise itself with unstinted expression, it would have no alloy of confused and inadequate ideas, but would emerge into pure intellectual light. Thus, there is a difference between the essence of the human mind *as it might be*, if relieved of controlling conditions, and as it *is* in its subjection to them; and it is spoken of in both ways, sometimes with inclusion, at others with exclusion, of the negative element from the imagination [1].

§ 9. *Transition from Knowing to Doing.*

With Spinoza, as with the current philosophy of his age, all the human phenomena were varieties of *Idea*. All the properties of a nature, it was assumed, were to be educed from its essence, on which they depend; the essence of man (i.e. what distinguished him from other kinds) *was his understanding;* and so his *cognitive* states were taken as presupposed in the active, and were installed in the leading place of every psychology. Feeling, affection, will, were different types of *idea*, or modes of *thinking*. Hence, in advancing to Spinoza's doctrine of *character*, we meet again the intellectual laws and classifications which we have been reviewing, charged with new functions, yet claiming an unimpaired identity. The first enquiry must be for the link of connection between parts of our nature that appear so little dependent in causation, and so little concurrent in their proportions.

That link is supplied by a Law, boldly assumed as universal in nature, though not apparently involved in either of the attributes that constitute our world; viz. that, inherent in the essence of each existing thing, there is an *endeavour* (*conatus*) to persist in its existence. I speak of this law as '*assumed*' notwithstanding the proof adduced in its support, because it is proved in one sense, and applied in another:

[1] Eth. III. iii. and Schol.

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the plea urged on its behalf is the mere negative consideration that a particular thing, being a determinate mode of the attributes, cannot have in itself any suicidal element, but, being in existence, will not disappear without any external cause[1]. This amounts to no more than an absence of spontaneous change, and is only a statement, respecting any and everything, of the law of *inertia* for bodies in motion or at rest[2]. But to exclude a cause of destruction is not to provide a cause of fresh phenomena, and secure the development of a determinate history; and it is nothing less than this that Spinoza lays upon the shoulders of his *conatus*, when he plants it and sets it to work within our human nature. It is not content with offering a dead weight against non-existence: it keeps at a distance whatever would reduce, and selects and appropriates whatever may increase, the scope of the nature which it guards: it inspires love and aversion for helps and hindrances respectively: it is the secret spring of all volition; and conducts the whole drama of enterprise and passion. Of no such positive power as this does the negative demonstration afford the slightest evidence; so far as it is granted, it must be as a *postulate*.

The inadequacy of this principle to the work it has to do becomes yet more evident, when we take into account Spinoza's doctrine of the two causalities, and the relation between *essence and existence*. Only in God (substance) and not in finite things, does *essence involve existence*: there is nothing in the essence of man to determine into existence, or out of existence, Paul or John or other men, few, many, or all: it is equally perfect as a definition of potential existence, whether actually realised or not. Now the seat of the *conatus* is in the essence of each thing[3];

[1] Eth. III. vi.

[2] See Trendelenburg's Beiträge, II. p. 82, especially note 1.

[3] Eth. III. vii. 'The *conatus* of each thing to persist in its existence is simply the actual essence of the thing itself.' For, 'from each thing's essence necessarily follow certain results; and it is competent to nothing but what follows from its nature; therefore the power or endeavour by

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this it is which asserts itself and insists upon its adequate expression in a mode of extension, and which repels whatever would remove it and deny it way. If so, however, the essence, instead of being neutral towards the existence and inoperative upon it, treats it as an effect which it is entitled to command and control; the *attempt* is in the essence, while the *thing attempted* is the existence. And thus Spinoza, after renouncing the field of existence and surrendering it to the *nexus naturæ*, re-invades it in the name of the essence, and claims over it at least a partial jurisdiction.

The truth is, Spinoza had to effect the passage in some way from idea to action; and it was beyond the resources of his deductive method to find it; just as motion does not necessarily follow from extension, so neither does agency from thinking. He tried to link them together by using *affirmation* as an intermediary: affirmation was the logical outcome of thought: and it was presupposed in volition, which makes affirmation of a thing as good[1]. Why not say

which each thing tries to act is nothing but its actual essence.' Yes; but if it is competent to nothing but what follows from its nature, and if, as we have been told, existence *does not follow* from its nature, then *it cannot try for existence.*

[1] It is impossible to give any account of the *Voluntas* of Spinoza against which some passages may not be quoted. There is indeed one position respecting it from which he starts and with which he ends; viz. that it has its origin in *cognition* and involves an *act of judgment*. 'We insist,' he says (De Deo, II. ii. Vol. II. 304) 'on *knowledge* as the immediate cause of all passions in the soul; considering it as absolutely impossible that anyone, without the above-mentioned modes of conception, could be brought to love, desire, or any other modifications of will.' And again (Ibid. II. xvi. Vol. II. 329), 'Desire is an inclination which the soul has towards something which it elects as good. Hence, before our desire directs itself externally upon anything, we have previously formed a judgment that the thing in question is something good; which affirmation, or (in universal terms) power of affirming and denying, is called Will.' This identification of Will with judgment is repeated in Eth. II. xlviii. Schol.: 'by *Will* I understand the power of affirming and denying, and *not* Desire (*cupiditas*): the power, I mean, whereby the mind affirms and denies what is true or false, and not the desire by which the mind seeks and shuns things.' Though in the first of these passages he calls *Desire* 'a modification of Will,' and in the last excludes it from Will, it is merely that he had come to take at two stages the fact which he began by treating as one; and now separated, as 'Will,'

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then that intellect and will are the same, so far as both consist of predication; with only the difference, that the one limits itself to true predication, while the other risks a good many that are not true? The answer is that, for intellectual judgment, you have *only to predicate:* for voluntary agency you need *something more:* it does not terminate in the monotonous award of its stock epithets 'good' and 'bad,' and die away in interior assent and dissent; but prolongs itself in the sphere of extension, betraying its presence by movements of the body and a determinate series of material phenomena. It is this *migration of activity* from the field *of thought* to that of *being*, which constitutes volitional agency, and which is totally irresolvable into affirmation and denial. Precisely the same illusion is involved in attaching a *conatus* to every *essence:* the essence belongs to the category of the eternal and immanent: the *conatus* is a device for getting work out of it in the field of finite and material things. The doctrine involves an intercommunication between the two attributes quite at variance with their alleged parallelism; and it surreptitiously introduces a *dynamic* causality under the

the prior 'judgment that the thing is good,' from the consequent executive movement 'of the soul towards the object of election;' confining the word 'Desire' to the latter. In this readjustment of the terms, there is nothing to disturb the original conception of the *order of the phenomena*, viz. (1) an affirmation of a thing as good; and then, as effect of this, (2) an appropriating 'direction of the soul towards it.' But what are we to say to the following statement (Eth. III. ix. Schol.): 'it is plain that we try for (*conari*), will (*velle*), appetise and desire nothing because we judge it good; but, inversely, judge a thing to be good because we try for, will, appetise, and desire it?' This surely is a complete reversal of the former doctrine, and makes the affection the necessary prefix to what before had been insisted on as its 'immediate cause.' Moreover, in spite of the notice given in Eth. II. xlviii. Schol., that by Will (*voluntas*) he does *not* mean Desire (*cupiditas*), we find these alienated neighbours fully reconciled in the next Part; e. g. 'This will or propension (*appetitus*) to benefit is called *benevolence*, and is simply *Desire* (*cupiditas*), *arising from Pity*' (Ibid. III. xxvii. Cor. 3, Schol.). And again, in explaining his definition of *Cupiditas* (Ibid. III. Affect. Def. I.), Spinoza says: 'Under the word *Desire* I understand any of man's conatus, impetus, appetitus, et *volitiones*.' See Camerer, p. 114, note, who has noticed the inconsistency of the 'Ethica' in the use of the word *Voluntas*.

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guise of *thought sequence*, which can give it no credentials. If Spinoza thus unconsciously misused his higher spiritual conception in an uncongenial field, it is not the first time that angels have been not only entertained unawares, but set to do menial service for the tent of their temporary abode.

On this *conatus*, however (which he had early treated as identical with *life*[1]), Spinoza leaps the parallels and rides across from the eternities to the world of phenomena, from affirmation to volition, from deductive thinking to action and passion. Taken as *universal* in nature, it imports thither *potentia* in place of Ratio; regarded as *human*, i.e. belonging to body and mind together, it assumes the form of *appetitus;* as limited to mind alone, it is *voluntas* (which may be mere blind inclination); as recognised by the *self-conscious* mind, it is *cupiditas*[2]. So far as it is put forth by our adequate ideas, i.e. on an unobstructed path, it constitutes our *freedom:* so far as by our inadequate, i.e. on a path beset by controlling causes, it subjects us to the thraldom of *inflicted feelings*. These are what Spinoza especially means by the *affections:* they involve both the body and the mind, and would be impossible but for the passivity which we have from the former. But there are self-conscious *mental states* in which we leave behind all *immediate and present relation to the body*, yet retain some feeling originally attendant on its changes; so that, in simply thinking, we now feel. As it is not worth while to invent a separate name for this case, the word *affection* may be extended so as to take in *all the emotions;* not only the great mass that stir upon the plane of the imagination, but the exceptional few that rise to the altitude of Reason and Intuition. They are all of them different varieties of the *conatus*, which is the mainspring of the whole ethical life.

[1] Per *vitam* intelligimus *vim per quam res in suo esse perseverant.* Cog. Met. II. vi. Vol. II. 486.
[2] Eth. III. ix. Schol.

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§ 10. *Dependent Affections, and their Primaries.*

Spinoza reckons three primary affections; of which, however, two only,—*Lætitia*, *Tristitia*,—pleasure and pain,—are placed strictly upon the same line, while the third, *Cupiditas*, desire, is dependent on the other two and presupposes them. *Pleasure* is the feeling in which the mind passes to greater perfection: *pain*, that in which it passes to less; the word 'perfection' being used, it will be remembered, for 'reality' or *scope of being*[1]. It is not meant that the mind compares the former with the present state of itself and the body, and pronounces accordingly a pleasant or painful judgment; but only that, without any reflection on the case, there is a felt enhancement or abatement of bodily and mental power[2]. This consciousness refers immediately to the body; and the idea of increase or diminution of its power is attended by a corresponding increase or diminution of the thinking power in the mind. Pleasure and pain thus serve as notices to the mind, of how its states stand related to the instinct of self-conservation; without them, this instinct would be blind; but furnished with them, it takes the form of the third primary affection, *Desire*, viz. to preserve the increment, or arrest the decrement, of being: the desire being intense in proportion to the measure of the change[3]. Yet one qualification must be added; viz. that the desire which springs from pleasure, caused *ab extra*, is stronger than that from similar pain; because pleasure heightens, while pain lowers, the self-conserving *conatus*; and though, in the latter case, the effort is in proportion to the pain, yet it is the effort of a nature weakened by the suffering. Besides, in the former case, you have the external cause for the ally, in the latter, for the opponent, of your native power; and you wield the sum, instead of the difference, of the two forces[4]. The title of these three

[1] Eth. III. xi. Schol.
[2] Ibid. III. Def. of the Affections; Explicatio at the end of the book.
[3] Ibid. III. xxxvii.
[4] Ibid. IV. xviii.

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affections to stand as primary is obvious from this exposition: without pleasure and pain there would be no desire; without desire, no awakening and no direction of *conatus;* and therefore no possibility and no contents of the ethical life.

From these data Spinoza traces the origin of more than thirty derivative affections, many of them (as hope and fear) arising in antithetic pairs. Instead of following him through the ingenious psychology by which he effects this construction, I must content myself with indicating the few leading principles on which he relies for accomplishing it. This is the less difficult, because these principles either already belonged, or have come to belong, to the common stock of psychological resources, and are familiar to every reader of modern philosophical literature. They might perhaps be all included in the doctrine of 'association of ideas;' but only by forcing on Spinoza a simplification foreign to his thought; and it will be more true to him to distribute his exposition into smaller parcels.

(1) Pleasure and Pain are converted into *Love and Hate* by being referred to an external object as *Cause.* And this inevitably takes place, because we scarcely ever experience them except in presence of some other body which is partner with our own in the effect we feel. To the image of the object cling the ideas of what we enjoy or suffer when it is there; and this investiture of it with attractive or repulsive colouring is what we mean by love and hate. So far, we are not taken beyond the definition of Hobbes, that love is the idea of a pleasure associated with the idea of its cause. The varieties of love and hate are as numerous as the objects which please and displease, though separate names are acquired only by the broader differences, either in the external objects or in the parts of our nature to which they speak; and even then it is frequently their excess alone that gives them a place in our vocabulary; as, for example, *intemperance* and *gluttony*.

(2) The form which the natural *conatus* takes in the

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imagination is that of a spontaneous maintenance of all pleasant images and banishment of their opposites, with the effect of increasing the corporeal and mental power. To this cause may be referred many an enhancement and perversion of love and hate; the enjoyment of fancied harm to an object of aversion; the attempt to find excuses which justify our dislike; the dwelling upon our own merits, and shutting our eyes to our own faults; the dream of others' praise, and the shrinking from their censure; the magnifying of the good qualities of our friends and of the evil of our enemies.

(3) A fruitful source of new varieties Spinoza finds in what he calls *Imitatio affectuum*,—a principle which, under the name of *Sympathy*, was worked out with infinite ingenuity by Adam Smith in his 'Theory of the Moral Sentiments.' It simply assumes that, when we attend to any visible affection in our like, we become similarly affected ourselves. Of this 'fellow-feeling' the most obvious forms are direct *compassion* and *benevolence*, i.e. adoption in ourselves of the suffering and happiness of others. But it may take even the inverse order, of a desire that others should feel as we do and ratify our love and hatred; and then this demand on others that they shall repeat ourselves becomes *ambition*. In self-applause, in emulation, in repentance, we do but adopt the pleasure, the desire, the censures, of others; and, even in envy, we enter into the success of another, only with a pang from failure of our own.

(4) By what is called the '*Law of transference*,' objects in themselves indifferent to us become interesting by their connection with the causes of pleasure and pain; a process rendered familiar by the stock example of *money*; the power of which over the imagination goes far beyond its intrinsic value, and is measured rather by all collectively than by each disjunctively of the advantages it can command. The same principle finds endless illustrations in human life: there is scarcely a liking or disliking that is not in part due to it: it can endear the most homely objects and the least

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lovely features; and sadden the most envied life with regret for something missed or lost in which no observer would suspect any charm at all. Even a faint connection, distant perhaps by two or three removes, with what we love or hate, suffices to invest an object with the interest of favour or aversion; a slight resemblance to my friend's friend bespeaks my predilection, and admiration of his rival repels me.

(5) As it is the function of imagination to bring objects before us *as present*, so are its functions enfeebled by whatever contradicts their presence, and puts them away into the past or the future; i.e. *Time associations* modify the feelings towards things pleasant and unpleasant. Pleasure only promised, pain only threatened, become variable and wavering, and are called *Hope* and *Fear;* which, on the removal of uncertainty, pass into *confidence* and *despair;* or, on the arrival of the moment which suddenly takes the doubt away, into *joy* and *disappointment*. Countless shades of human passion are due to this prolific influence; without which the drama of life would be tame, and the aspect of character monotonous.

(6) The belief which men, blind to the necessity of nature, entertain of their own freedom, and of a contingency in events, is wholly answerable for some affections, and greatly deepens and intensifies others. But for this, no one could be *angry* with the wicked, more than with the blind or the insane; or inflict retribution for injury, or render gratitude for unearned benefits; and the self-judgments of remorse and approval would disappear with the ideas of merit and demerit on which they rest. It cannot be doubted (Spinoza admits) that our moral affections towards one another are on a far greater scale than they would be, if we did not suppose ourselves and others free[1].

Such are the passive affections imposed upon us by the play of external causes and the inadequate ideas of the imagination, contesting and confusing the *conatus* of our

[1] Eth. III. xlix. and Schol.

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rational essence. They constitute what Spinoza calls our 'servitude.' From the review of them 'it is plain,' he says, 'that we are tossed about by external causes in many ways, and that, like waves of the sea stirred by opposite winds, we sway hither and thither, not knowing to what our fate will bring us[1].'

§ 11. *Autonomous Affections.*

Since all *pain* (*tristitia*) is what we feel in declension to *less* perfect being, it would never be experienced were it not for the external causes which limit and control our own proper essence; and it falls away from view when we quit the field of imagination with its inadequate ideas, and concentrate attention upon the adequate ideas of the second and third kinds of *cognitio*[2]. These are all of them pure expressions of the mind's rational essence,—its own self-activity, unchecked by foreign interference: they are therefore cases of successful *conatus*, in which we pass to more perfect being, i.e. experience *pleasure* (*lætitia*), and consequently its attendant *desire*. These two elements of feeling, therefore, survive our emergence from the life of imagination into that of understanding, and carry over an affectional colouring to the pure intellectual functions[3]. As this transition is simply an immunity from extrinsic pressures, and an opening of free play to the mind's own essence, it is *action*, it is *power*, it is *virtue*, being unqualified conformity to our proper law[4]; it is *self-conservation*, being the asserted claim of our nature's highest good[5]; it is *freedom*, since it clears the space around that nature of all that can deflect it from its path[6]. To Spinoza, therefore, it was no paradox to say that to understand is to act; that knowledge is power; that power is virtue; that virtue is self-interest[7]; that inward necessity is perfect freedom[8]. When he insists

[1] Eth. III. lix. Schol. [2] Ibid. III. lix. [3] Ibid. III. lviii.
[4] Ibid. IV. Def. 8, xxiii. [5] Ibid. IV. xxiv.
[6] Tract. Pol. ii. 7, Vol. I. pp. 286, 287.
[7] Eth. IV. xix. xx. [8] Tract. Pol. ii. 7, Vol. I. pp. 286, 287.

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on the principle that no virtue can be prior to the effort for self-conservation, which is the very foundation of virtue[1], we must remember that the 'self' of which he speaks is *not the receptive imagination* (which is precisely the mind's *foreign exposure or non-ego*), not therefore the 'passions' and sensibilities, but the understanding, which is the essence and regulating centre of our being; the 'self-conservation' of which means, not the indulgence, but the control, of the senses and imagination.

While it is only just to accept this as the real thought of Spinoza, it is undoubtedly obscured by the wavering boundary which he assigns to the Self with its *conatus*. The effect of its uncertain position becomes apparent, when we ask for the *motive power* which is to equip the essential self for its resistance to invasion from without. We are told in answer, that the true armour is found in '*the knowledge of good*;' only, it must not be a mere intellectual assent to a true proposition about 'good,' but a *feeling* for it that is more than a match for the affection it may have to overcome:—a proviso which (I may remark *en passant*) itself admits that knowledge and desire do not always vary their degrees together[2]. This word 'good' being new in Spinoza's scheme of thought, and hitherto discarded as a vulgar subjectivity, we naturally beg to have it defined; and learn that by 'good' and 'bad' are meant all helps and hindrances to self-conservation. How then are we to 'know' them, when we see them? The answer is, their marks are, respectively, pleasure and pain (*lætitia* and *tristitia*), the consciousness of which carries in it a recognition of their cause, i.e. a knowledge of the good and bad[3]. Thus it turns out, that pleasure and pain are the marks or arbiters of good and bad; and when we feel the pleasurable, we know the good, and are furnished with the motive power required. In order to test this rule, we must determine what 'pleasure' is. Say that it means the *satisfaction of*

[1] Eth. IV. xxii. and Cor. xxv.
[2] Ibid. IV. xiv.
[3] Ibid. IV. viii.

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desire, and presupposes this[1]; and further, that desire is nothing but the *conatus* of our essence to assert itself[2]; then, to define its limits, we must settle when we are within and when we are without the limits of that essence. If they go no further than the understanding, then the only *conatus*, the only desire, the only pleasure, is that of clear and adequate ideas; and the 'knowledge of the good' is the knowledge how to get them; and to aim at self-conservation is to become, as far as possible, the organ of pure and proportionate truth. This is to set up the autonomous activity of the mind as the authority which is to bend to nothing. But suppose two alterations made in the conceptions thus defined. (1) Widen the scope of our essence, so as to embrace the imagination as well as the understanding; then, the *conatus* works indifferently for inadequate and adequate ideas: desires tend to both alike; and pleasure comes from the satisfaction of both desires; and the mark of good equally attaches to the objects of the passive and of the autonomous affections. (2) Invert the assumed relation between desire and pleasure: let pleasure be the primary datum, the experience of which gives rise to subsequent desire; then it is prior to the *conatus* in which our activity is centred, and is something delivered upon our mere receptivity; and, when taken as the mark and arbiter of good, commends to us, as of first-hand worth, precisely the passive sensibilities which alloy our essence with so many inadequate ideas. Now Spinoza's *intended ethics* are doubtless conformed to the first and stricter order of conceptions; but his theory is so loosely stated as to be unguarded against the second interpretation. He not only extends the *conatus* to the inadequate and confused ideas, so as to endow the understanding with no special advantage from it, but he also allows the existence of *other pleasure* (*lætitia*) than that from the satisfaction of desire; speaking of '*every kind of pleasure*,—and *especially that which* satisfies any sort of desire[3].'

[1] Eth. III. ix. Schol. [2] Ibid. III. lviii. [3] Ibid. III. xxxix. Schol.

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Accepting the former interpretation as giving the serious meaning of Spinoza, we find him identifying the human personality with the *intellect*, and therefore bringing all the proper functions of our nature, as active, to one, viz. to *understand or know*[1]. This constitutes the whole contents of the perfect life; love of it, with self-conformity to it, is the sole autonomous affection and the sole virtue; and by their tendency to help or hinder this, must all things else be pronounced good or bad. Of knowledge, however, notwithstanding its unity, there are two fields: we need to understand *ourselves:* we need to understand *other things;* and it is not always the same influence that subserves them both. If we summon the passive affections to come up for trial by this standard, they will receive unequal sentences, though none can escape with entire acquittal. To content ourselves with one or two illustrative examples, it is obvious that the opposites, *Pride* and *Self-disparagement*, are alike incompatible with *Self-knowledge*, being deviations from it in the direction of excessive and defective appreciation; the former doubtless the more dangerous foe, reinforced as the inner tendency to it is by flatterers who echo it. Even *Humility*, consisting of a mere negative consciousness of *what we have not*, impairs the self-knowledge of *what we have;* and *Repentance* and *Shame* involve similar illusions, from concentration of insight upon our weakness, and from blindness to our true essence, i.e. our strength. The opposite feelings, of *Self-contentment* and *love of reputation*, may be more or less well founded; but are very liable to lapse into vain passions.

Turning to the knowledge *of things around us*, we find it on all sides confused by the affections which they cause in us. *Hope* and *Fear*, as modifications of pleasure and pain, exist in virtue of our ignorance of the order of nature, and in their turn disturb the clear vision by which we might know it better. And there is scarcely an affection awakened in us by our fellow men, that does not prevent us from

[1] Eth. IV. xxvi. xxvii.

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seeing things as they are. To say nothing of *Jealousy*, of *Revenge*, of *Antipathy*, with their notorious illusions, the mere habit, common enough where there is no malice, of *over-estimation* or of *disparagement* of others, gives a false preponderance in our view to their agreeable or their disagreeable qualities. And *compassion* is continually putting an unreal colouring or an unreal intensity into the signs of suffering, diverting us from the study of causes, and impelling us to acts which we have reason to regret. There are doubtless occasions when good work may apparently be got out of a blind affection, as when a man founds a church to atone for his sins, or serves his country from ambition, or gives a public park from ostentation. But the *accidental* strokes of right action thus put forth by the dependent feelings would arise as *necessary* consequences of Reason. The self-denials of avarice, the generosities of ambition, cease when their immediate end is gained, and the repressed passions throw off their disguise; but the ground of rational virtue is constant, being nothing less than the very foundation of things.

A. FORTITUDO.—How then are we to designate the single autonomous affection in which all virtue is comprehended? It is *Fortitudo;* i.e. *firmness and steadfastness of character*, to act from the inward essence of the mind alone, and stand free from the sway of the passive affections. It is the life of a nature that has knowledge of itself and things, and is conformed to that knowledge. Penetrating and occupying as it does the whole field of character, it assumes two aspects, according as it expresses itself in action *purely personal*, or in action *relative to others*. In the former case, it takes the shape of *Animositas*, i.e. courage or high spirit to put the heel on importunate desires and withstand assailing passions. In the latter case, it is best described as *Generositas*, i. e. a temper which excludes all mean illusions and aversions that interfere with the harmony of men. In nothing does the man of high spirit more clearly evince his characteristic than in his bearing towards the ordinary objects of human fear. Guided always by the *real values* of things, he

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estimates the future as it will be when it is present, and the present as it will be when it is past, and prefers the greater good to the less, wherever it may lie in time; and, in the face of uncertain things, is ready, with equal composure, to go forth and meet a danger, or to retire before it, as the true balance of advantage may indicate; being neither rash from false shame, nor unmanned by terror. As all his desires are but the inward energy of his rational essence, they are always directed upon *positive* good, and can never be the passive recoil from some *tristitia:* they are the happy expression of himself alone: the objects they pursue are dear to him on their own account, and not as means of seeking or shunning some external thing. Hence, he is undisturbed by anxiety for his safety: 'he thinks of anything rather than death, and his wisdom is a reflection on life, not on death[1].' Equally free is he, in his dealings with others, from all the unsocial passions which proceed from inadequate ideas, and betray the mind's subjection to external things; and just in this immunity consists his '*Generosity*.' No doubt this temper may be hopelessly out of character with the fixed ideas of the people around him; but so far as he is compelled to live among fools, he will entangle himself with few relations to them; and especially will decline, as far as possible, the receipt of benefits from them, since he cannot honestly measure them by *their* rule, as will naturally be expected from him: yet, to avoid leaving a false impression of churlishness, he may find it truer at times not to repel their advances. But such concessions to good-will must not be confounded with selfish and cowardly prudence: they are a sacrifice, not to falsehood, but to truth; and 'the free man never acts with evil artifice, but always in good faith;'—a rule which Spinoza treats as absolute, and will not allow to be violable, even to save one's life[2]. This high tension of moral rigour in regard to veracity it is unusual to find in a system of Necessarian ethics. Less surprising is the lofty claim preferred for patient love, as the true return for

[1] Eth. IV. lxvii. [2] Ibid. IV. lxxii. Schol.

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hatred and the medicine for all the evil passions that assail our life; for whoever looks on these, not as *guilt incurred*, but only as sores and diseases of which men are victims, is quite consistent in commending them simply to hospital treatment, and pleading for the tender mercy which will best provide it. Spinoza, therefore, is strictly within his own logical limits when he claims for his 'generous' man, himself entirely free from all inharmonious passions, the disposition to exorcise them in every mind less sane by the power of rational affection; and crowns his claim with the memorable words, 'He who would return hatred for injury lives a miserable life indeed. But one who sets himself to lay siege to hatred with love you cannot deny to be a safe and happy warrior. With equal ease he faces a single foe or a host, and asks no aid from fortune. Yes; and those whom he conquers yield to him with joy, not with beaten but with augmented strength[1].' It is no wonder that this noble passage should be appealed to in evidence that the ethics of Spinoza rose to the level of the Christian; there is not here the faintest discord between the two. Only, there is this difference to be remembered: that Spinoza makes room for this enterprise of love by removing the ideas of sin and duty out of the way; Christianity proclaims it, not only without any such sacrifice, but while kindling these very ideas to the highest intensity. In this, the paradox of Philosophy, is the triumph of Religion.

The rational life, which sums itself up in *Fortitudo*, is more free as well as more complete in a commonwealth than in solitude, where the individual is his own master; for, till he is in relation with others, he does not reach *the common or concurrent elements* of life, which are the base of all reasonable *conatus* for self-conservation, and is in danger of desires which conflict with the conditions of social harmony. So the peculiar *security* of the autonomous life, i. e. the guarantee for constancy in it immunity from passion, lies in the knowledge of God; i. e. in the assurance which is

[1] Eth. IV. xlvi. and Schol.

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felt that all comes out of the necessity of nature, against which human passions fret in vain. To have only adequate and clear ideas is to be in absolute consonance with the real order and essence of things, and so removed from the possibility of surprise and fluctuation.

B. Amor Intellectualis Dei.—Were we limited to imagination and reason, we should be capable of both the varieties of *Fortitudo.* Our advance to the third,—the Intuitive,—grade of knowledge opens to us a higher and all-inclusive excellence,—*the Intellectual Love of God.* In his account of this affection Spinoza seems to reach his deepest shade of obscurity; which, however, is not altogether impenetrable, if the reader has courage to take the word '*God*' rigorously in the Spinozistic sense,—of the *common properties of things*,—the underlying base of all the differentiations in nature; and to divest it of all the contents which give it religious significance. The whole stress of this virtue, as special to the intuitive stage, is thrown upon the epithet *intellectualis*; for we are already familiar, in the prior stage, with the 'idea,' the 'knowledge,' the 'love' of God, unaccompanied with this predicate. Thus, we have been told that 'every idea of any body or particular thing involves God's eternal and infinite essence,' the 'knowledge of which,' thus gained, is adequate and complete[1]: and again it is said, that 'the mind can get to refer to the idea of God all bodily affections and images of things[2]; and further, that 'he who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his affections *loves* God, and the more so, the more he understands them[3].' To see what these high-sounding propositions really amount to, we must remember that, in the dialect of our philosopher, *to understand* a phenomenon or affection is to read it in its *cause*, and that its cause is the *essence* of which it is a property, and that the essence is a modification of either extension or thinking, and that these are attributes of Being *per se*, or Substance, i.e. God. The affections, then, of a body,—say, of a planet,

[1] Eth. II. xlv. xlvi. [2] Ibid. V. xiv. [3] Ibid. V. xv.

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—are understood, when its orbit is resolved into its centrifugal and centripetal determinants, and the several minor elements of its motion have been laid out in their proportions, so that its conditions in space, as a mode of the extended universe, are distinctly conceived. Thus to see it in its real relations to the universal attribute of extension is 'to *refer it to the idea of God*.' 'God' here means extension, or matter in its essence or ultimate laws. The phenomenon, when analysed, goes back to these and shows them; and then we *know God*. And, even short of scientific apprehension, we have at all events to think of a *real* for every phenomenon, of *substance* for every property, of *cause* for every effect; and in so far as any bodily affection throws us on these ideas as a background, it 'refers us to the idea of God.' But still we have not got to Spinoza's goal; for this logical relation of the finite appearance to the infinite base does not amount to the *love* of God; and his claim is content with nothing less. Here we must take notice, that it is only for *self*-knowledge, not for *all* knowledge of particular things, that he asserts the *amor Dei* as a consequence. The reason lies in his doctrine of imagination and the passive affections, as distinguished from the activity of the proper human essence. When an external thing impinges on our senses, the affection is a confused medley of its nature and of our nature, usually with much more of the latter than of the former, though the imagination always gives the larger credit to the former. To *understand* ourselves and our affections means, to cure this confusion and correct this error, and become master by insight over the experience of which we had been the passive recipient; we then read exactly what our rational essence has to do with it, and separate what is thrown in by foreign causes. In this exercise of discovery, the mind is aware of its own intelligent power, and feels glad in the successful action of its nature. And this gladness is referred to its cause, viz. the reality or truth which is discovered, i.e. God, who *is* all reality and truth. Now pleasure referred to its cause is *love*; therefore, this

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self-knowledge is love of God. This affection thus turns out to mean no more than the *happy consciousness of our own clear idea as a related part of the whole truth of nature.*

What then is added to this affection to qualify it for the special epithet *intellectualis?* Spinoza has rendered no distinct account of the marks by which the predicate is earned; and it is no wonder if, in attempting to supply the deficiency, his interpreters are not quite consistent with one another or even with themselves. Certain it is that the characteristics must be looked for in the *third kind of knowledge.* This at once puts out of court one of the marks insisted on by even so careful an expositor as Camerer, viz. that, to awaken this intellectual love, the mind must be engaged upon *necessary* knowledge, and apprehend its object *sub specie eternitatis* [1]. For, this condition, as we have seen, is fulfilled by both the second and third grade of knowledge, and is already claimed as one of the indispensable features of Ratio and its *communes notiones* [2]; and when again, in preparing for the topic of intellectual Divine Love, it is introduced as a joint feature of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God [3], it is only to secure it as a *requisite*, not to assert it as a *differentia.*

Knowledge of the third kind differs from ratio by apprehending *res singulares*, not indeed in their temporal presence, but in their essence as related to the essential attributes of nature, i.e. to the eternal essence of God. On this feature it is that the intellectual love depends; and the supreme

[1] Camerer, Die Lehre Spinoza's, p. 259: Denn 'sofern unser Geist sich selbst und seinen Körper unter der Form der Ewigkeit erkennt,—*und das ist ja die Erkenntniss der dritten Stufe,*—hat er nothwendig die Erkenntniss Gottes, und weiss dass er in Gott ist und durch Gott begriffen wird. Die Dinge unter der Form der Ewigkeit begreifen heisst sie begreifen als vermöge des Wesens Gottes real seiend oder vermöge dieses Wesens die existenz in sich schliessend.' The parenthetical clause here introduced doubtless affirms no more than is true, viz. that knowledge of the third grade is a knowledge sub specie eternitatis; but, as knowledge of the second grade is so too, the proposition which Camerer is citing and thus explains cannot be limited to Intuition, or treated as accounting for what is special in the Amor Intellectualis Dei.

[2] Eth. II. xliv. Cor. 2. [3] Ibid. V. xxix. xxx.

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example of this dependence is seen when the *res singularis* is the mind's own self. In the knowledge of other things, we see how their essences resolve themselves back into the laws of extension, i.e. how they lapse into the nature of God; and thus we look at them all as in God. But in knowing *ourselves*, in the consciousness of clear ideas in necessary links, we are aware that the inner necessity of our thought is identical with the real necessity of all thought, and that what ideally exists in us is but a mode of what eternally exists as true, i.e. we know God in knowing ourselves, and see ourselves to be in God: our mind is the seat of eternity (necessary knowledge); God is the seat of eternity; in the system of eternal truths both are identified, so far as mode can be identified with substance. What we think is part of the real attribute of thinking. Here we have an inward relation to God, through which he is cause of the mind's knowing, not as an external agent, but as its constituting essence, as its very principle and foundation; through which, further, we see in Him, not all things in general, regarded as objects, but our own particular mind, as the subject of intelligent power; and we think of Him, not as an imagined presence, but as the eternal and infinite element in which our true ideas subsist. Hence, the delight which we have in necessary knowledge, referred as it is to the universal real necessity as its cause, is at once intellectual *self-content*, and *intellectual love of God:* self-content, when the luminous ideas are contemplated as *ours*, won by the *conatus* of *our* thinking: love of God, when they are contemplated as *His*, belonging to *all* mind, and inherent in the essence of thinking itself.

From these characters assigned to the intellectual love of God it results, that this affection is nothing more than devotion to truth, or enthusiasm for philosophy. The language in which it is described may in part have commended itself to Spinoza by its mystical aspect, giving it a religious look to others and possibly to himself; but it is consistent with his general doctrine of cognition, as the delivery into

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the mind of the essences of things existing out of the mind, or the transmutation of the nature in extension into the nature in idea. God is the totality of essences in reality and in thought: our knowledge, in its highest stage, i.e. our mind, is made up of essences in idea: it is, therefore, partially one with God, and, in virtue of its self-consciousness, is aware of this, and rejoices in it. The many fine qualities which Spinoza claims for this love are all of them compatible with this interpretation of it as zeal for knowledge. Wherever it is paramount, no envy or jealousy can have place; for it is enhanced by the numbers who share it, and speaks in the aspiration 'Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets!' Nor can it, like other love, turn to hate; for this happens only from passively suffering something at the hand of the object loved; and here, as it comes of the mind's pure self-activity, receptivity, and therefore *Tristitia*, are excluded, and the very material for hate is absent. These predicates are truly and intelligibly attached to the aspiration after intellectual insight into the nature of things. But we are brought to a pause of doubt, when told that this love is '*eternal*;' for that 'it is a necessary consequence of the mind's nature, so far as this nature is considered as eternal truth involved in the nature of God.' And this is the only love that is eternal: the passive affections have the mere duration of the body[1]. And so the fear of death disappears under its influence. The more the mind can get to understand in the second and third ways of knowledge, the greater is the part of it which is eternal and remains untouched by the fear of death[2]. This language seems plainly to teach the exemption of the human mind, at least of its highest power, from death; for, though Spinoza warns us against taking his word '*eternal*' as saying anything about duration more or less, and begs us to understand it as putting total negation upon time and affirming only *existence per se*, yet when he himself employs it in antithesis to *death*, and when he divides the human mind into two

[1] Eth. V. xxxiii. xxxiv. and Cor. [2] Ibid. V. xxxviii.

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parts, one perishable, the other 'eternal,' and speaks of the latter as capable of being greater or less relatively to the other, what can we make of *such* eternity except imperishableness or *continued duration* in spite of the lapse of the connected body and imagination? Does he not here set the example of disregarding his own warning? Does the mere avoidance of the word '*immortality*' save him from committing himself to any *time predication?* Not so; for what he affirms is *deathlessness*, which is the same thing. Or, can it be pleaded that this denial of *a terminus* is only in virtue of his denial of *what can be terminated*, i.e. duration? If so, the denial carries its exclusion also to the other extremity, for the 'eternal,' as timeless, can no more begin than end; yet he has repeatedly taught us that 'the first thing that constitutes the essence of the human mind is the *idea of the body*, —an idea which, as parallel concomitant of the body, he certainly does not exempt from its commencement. It is no wonder, therefore, that, in this proposition, Spinoza should have been supposed to teach that the 'intellectual love of God' conferred ἀθανασία on the individual soul imbued with it. The reason for otherwise understanding him I will reserve for another section, in which we may examine his doctrine as to the destination of the human mind.

Meanwhile, we have to learn yet another and crowning glory of this intellectual love: hitherto we have contemplated it as the highest virtue of man; but it is more, we are now assured: it is no less to be affirmed, and that in infinite measure, *of God;* '*God loves Himself with infinite intellectual love*[1].' To prove this, it is alleged that God, being absolutely infinite, has infinite perfection, i.e. all reality, to take pleasure in (*gaudet* infinitâ perfectione): to all reality there is a concomitant idea: He has, therefore, an idea of His perfection; and of Himself as its cause, since he is *causa sui:* but to have *lætitia* together with the idea of its cause is Love; therefore, He loves Himself with infinite intellectual love. On first hearing this language, everyone, I

[1] Eth. V. xxxv.

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suppose, would understand it to be spoken of a personal Deity self-identified with the happiness of His creation. Those who are aware how little such a conception can be attributed to Spinoza would still, I think, assume without a doubt that, in predicating these things of God, he intends to affirm them of the Natura *naturans*, the substantive source of all. Yet, if we so interpret him, we bring him into direct contradiction with himself; for he has told us, a few propositions further back, that God has no feelings, and cannot be affected by that *lætitia* which here figures as the very nerve of his argument. Nay, he carries out this negation to its conclusion, and warns us that God can have *no love or aversion* [1]. We meet with precisely the same apparent self-contradiction in regard to the predicate '*intellect*:' he denies intellect to God; and yet he speaks of our understanding as *part of the infinite intellect of God*. The explanation is the same in both instances. The *denial* refers to the *Natura naturans*: the *affirmation* to the *Natura naturata*. In God, i.e. in the nature of things, self-conscious understanding and self-conscious love first come up into actuality in man (or other finite rational beings); and there it is,—in the history and experience of the totality of originated minds,—that we must seek for the truth of the mysterious proposition I have quoted;—for the *lætitia*, for the *delight in perfection*, and the *sense of causality*, and the consequent intellectual love: they are spoken of God, but they are meant for man. In trying to do the utmost justice to Spinoza, I have sometimes fancied him replying thus: 'In denying feeling to God, yet affirming *lætitia* of Him, I am chargeable with no inconsistency; for I have defined *lætitia* to be *the passing of a nature into greater perfection* [2]; and why may not a being pass into greater perfection *without feeling it*? just as the earth is held to have become the scene of organic from inorganic existence, and the solar system to have evolved its varieties from previous homogeneous conditions? In the sense of my definition, these things have had and

[1] Eth. V. xvii. and Cor. [2] Ibid. III. Affectuum, Def. 2.

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have their *lætitia ;* without on that account being treated as sensitive animals.' This plea would undoubtedly reconcile the claim of *lætitia* with the disclaimer of feeling, for 'the nature of God;' but there remains the contradiction that *transition* to greater perfection is essential to *lætitia* and impossible to God. Nor do I think that Spinoza would resort to this plea, or had any intention of providing for an *unfelt lætitia ;* for his definition limits itself to the case of *man*,— 'Lætitia est *hominis transitio*,' &c. ; and though no connotation of feeling is involved in the word *transitio*, it *is* involved in the qualifying word *hominis*.

The 'infinite perfection' then in which, he says, the Divine nature *gaudet*, cannot possibly be the *absolute perfection* of God: it is not the perfection of an infinite *esse*, but of an infinite *fieri ;* for there is nothing on which he lays greater stress than on the dependence of *gaudium* on *change of state ;* 'Dico *transitionem :* nam lætitia *non est ipsa perfectio*[1].' We must seek it in the Natura *naturata ;* it is the joy of a universe become *self-conscious*, and especially of *man ;* of a nature not strange to its own *conatus* and realising it, and so always passing to greater perfection; of a mind becoming ever more the seat and medium of necessary truth, and possessing itself of an ideal cosmos coincident with the real. You will say, 'Why then, if this joy is felt by *man*, does Spinoza make *God* the subject of it?' In order to *generalise it* and compel you to apply his doctrine of immanence in the intensest and amplest way: you are to think, not psychologically, of an individual mind, but universally, of all minds, actual or possible, which as modes may represent the eternal *res cogitans*. Spinoza knows no God other than the total extension and thought of the universe of extended and thinking beings; and when their predicates are taken up and handed over to him, it is to warn us that we are to read them in their infinitude of essence, and not merely in their temporal existence. When this warning is duly applied, the purport of our proposition

[1] Eth. III. Affectuum Explicatio.

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will turn out to be simply this: that 'what has been said about the intellectual love as a property of man might just as well be said of it as a property of God; inasmuch as what we *mean by 'God,' as a possible subject of love*, is nothing else than that mode of attribute which we call the human mind.' This will come out more distinctly, after we have examined the next proposition; which is probably answerable for more metaphysical delirium than any equal number of written lines that ever proceeded from a philosopher's pen, though I am far from saying that in due time Hegel may not wrest the palm from Spinoza. The proposition runs thus: 'The mind's intellectual love towards God is the very love of God with which He loves Himself;—loves, not in so far as He is infinite, but in so far as He is expressed by the essence of the human mind considered under the form of eternity (*sub specie eternitatis*): i.e. the mind's intellectual love towards God is part of the infinite love with which God loves Himself[1].' The proof of this thesis is as follows: 'For, this love in the mind must be referred to the mind's *activity*, whereby it contemplates itself, with an attendant idea of God as cause; i.e. an activity in which God, so far as the human mind can express Him, contemplates Himself, with the attendant idea of Himself; and so, this love in the mind is part of God's infinite love to Himself.' 'Hence,' it is added in a corollary, 'God, so far as He loves Himself, loves men; and consequently, the love of God towards men, and the intellectual love of the mind towards God, are one and the same.' For God's love to Himself, when identified with the love of man to God, is inseparable from a *lætitia* in man himself, therefore from love of man towards himself.

After what has been said of the preceding proposition, I hope that the key to this paradoxical statement will be easily found and applied. Notwithstanding the appearance, under the names of 'The Mind' and 'God,' of two *subjects* and

[1] Eth. V. xxxvi. Cf. Malebranche, De Inquirenda Veritate, V. 5, quoted above, p. 191.

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objects of Love, there is in truth only *one*, under two labels; and the whole transaction described is purely human. It is expressly said that, when the mind intellectually loves, it is God that is the lover: the human mind then is God. To relieve the shock of this identification, Spinoza qualifies it by making it partial, instead of total: the human mind is God, *as far as it goes;* and God is the human mind, not of course in His infinitude, but *so far as His nature takes the form of this particular essence.* In this specialised form, love, like understanding, emerges in His nature, which, as infinite, can have no such predicate: if you ask for the *consciousness* of it, there is but *one*, and that is *the human:* you may also call it Divine, if you like; but this only provides a second name for the same fact. One other question may be raised: what is the effect of the subordinate qualifying clause, 'the essence of the human mind *under the form of eternity?*' Simply to limit our attention to the *necessary nature* of the mind as a mode of the thinking attribute, in contradistinction from its *temporal existence* in this or that instance through the laws of phenomenal succession. The doctrine, therefore, here laid down as to the *seat* of love is that *man's love* is what we must mean when we speak of *God's love*, and that the latter is simply the infinite sum-total of the love experienced by all finite minds. And, as to the *object* of love, there is no difference on the two sides of the main equation: our 'intellectual love' is directed upon '*God;*' and so is God's *self-love:* the term in both instances denotes the *necessary truth of things as apprehended by the necessary laws of thinking.*

In the corollary, however, the same trick is practised on the *object* which has been already applied to the subject; and the *Self* that God loves turns out to be *Mankind.* After the previous identification, there can be no difficulty about this: the essence of humanity is one with the universal or Divine nature no less in you than in me; and the substitution of the modal for the supreme name is no less legitimate in the predicate, than that of the supreme for the

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modal in the subject. So it comes out, that for God to love Himself is for Him to love men. But His love to Himself, we have seen, is equivalent to man's love to Him; therefore, His love towards man is equivalent to man's love towards Him. These wonderful transformations are all wrought by the mere verbal device of duplicate denomination of the same thing; one and the same feature, of love, is slipped, now under one name, now under another: the double names being of persons with the personality emptied out; and the result is a tissue of apparent contradictions which, on examination, prove to be a monotonous tautology. It was long before I could find courage to look behind the venerable mask of these empty propositions; and it was not without pain that I found, in the guise of mystical devotion, what I can hardly rank higher than logical thimble-rigging.

The 'intellectual love of God' is, in Spinoza's view, the culminating point of human excellence, into which *Fortitudo* becomes sublimed, and where it reaches its repose. As it is simply *devotion to truth*, its supreme position marks the transcendency, in his mind, of *knowledge over Ethics*, the dependence of *character* upon *thought;* the final transfiguration of virtue into serene and luminous intellect. This is highly characteristic of Spinoza's philosophy; in which the affections and impulses are born from cognitive ideas, and in cognitive ideas expire; the strife of the moral nature emerging, not into the 'saint's rest,' but into the philosopher's. Having looked at the origin and the end of this ethical history, and surveyed the separate affections that appear upon its stage, let us now see how its causalities work together; especially whether they are so related as to supply the conditions of *Duty*.

§ 12. *Conflict of Passive and Autonomous Affections.*

The complete freedom which is attained in the intellectual love of God consists in escape from the inadequate ideas of the imagination and the final dominance of the adequate

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ideas of the understanding. Prior to this emancipation, we are the subjects of both: not indeed simultaneously in any half-and-half way (for there can be no compromise between the true and the untrue), but in an alternative way, different in different minds, and successively in the same; so as to exhibit defects of freedom in various degrees and with many fluctuations. As freedom consists in the sole ascendency of the mind's own rational essence, and its defect in subjection to external causes, which mark their presence by passive affections, this mixed and imperfect state is in its nature a conflict of energies, of our own against what is not our own, of the mind against things. On the issue of this conflict our entire well-being is staked; victory pronounced on one side flinging us into a restless sea of sinful troubles; on the other, planting us on the eternal rock of virtue and peace. How then is the suspense of this strife determined, and why determined differently in different cases? Are we *combatants* only, with a fixed measure of strength, so as to be at the mercy of a relative allotment of forces which we cannot alter? or *arbiters* also, empowered to pour in whatever reserves may be needful for the triumph of the '*melior pars?*' If the former, the problem is merely one of natural dynamics, to be settled by the calculus of physical equilibrium: if the latter, it is qualified to take its place in the moral field, and to contain within it the conditions of personal obligation.

Now when we enquire of Spinoza how the slavery to passive affections is to be ended, and the rightful ascendency of the free mind established, he tells us by what process of thought the power of these affections is abated; and supplies us with some excellent rules, by following which we shall preserve our rational balance amid the influences that would sway us hither and thither. To render passion harmless, we must get to know it. We must not allow its external cause to linger in our imagination and bewitch it, but must scrutinise it, define its exact relations to our nature, so as to break up its image into clear and distinct

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ideas. It is disenchanted, as soon as it is brought into the light of adequate knowledge: an affection ceases to be passive, when worked upon and superseded by activity of intellect; what was before confused loses its confusion, when reduced by rational analysis. The exciting object, thus treated, becomes dissociated from us, and takes its place, not in our history, but in the outward order of natural necessity; and, when thus stripped of its aspect of causal promise or individual free power, sinks in importance and fascination; while the emotion it excited, referred to ourselves as a sensitive weakness incurred through limitation of our proper essence, grows pale and faints away through its own detection. Thus, self-knowledge becomes tantamount to self-mastery. This effect in morals is analogous to the changed view of individual objects which, in science, follows a discovery of the energies and laws that subscribe to produce them. To the eye of sense and imagination, the world is an assemblage of concrete things, each of which appeals to us as a detached individual. To the eye of science, the world is made up of a group of energies or separate types of movement, which, in their combinations, set up the properties, of wider or narrower sweep, that concentrate themselves in parts of space under the aspect of objects. The ideas of these are the *communes notiones* with which all intellectual procedure works; and they play the same part in the ethical relation of outward things to our feeling, as in their intellectual relation to our thought; recombining the dispersive interest of countless insulated objects into the sublime simplicity of a few comprehensive laws. This self-knowledge, and subjection of the affections to adequate knowledge, must be sought at times when we are not agitated by them, but can see them as they are: the rational estimate of them, which may then be gained, will get associated with their idea and rise with them into thought when they recur, so as to moderate or even disarm them.

Subsidiary to this prescription, of intellectual dissolution

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of the passions, is the advice to form, in hours of impartial reflection, a distinct preconception of the right life, with detail sufficient to protect us on all sides from wavering or surprise; and to distribute and define this preconception in fixed rules and maxims, impressed upon the memory, both as general propositions and in examples of individual character; e.g. that hatred is to be conquered by love: that mutual friendship and society are the true source of self-content: that men, like all other objects, are disposed of by necessity of nature (he does not add, '*and that we, being men, are so too*'). With a store of such approved principles at hand, that which best fits the passing crisis will be sure to come to our aid, and serve as our ally in the conflict with passion. In virtue of the parallelism of mental and bodily states, these associations will not limit themselves to the order of ideas, but will extend to the corporeal conditions, and control the physiology not less than the psychology of feeling. In Spinoza's exposition of the rationale of these counsels of moral wisdom, we have a remarkable anticipation of the Hartleyan doctrine in its application to the formation of *habit*, whether in thought or in action.

Such rules as these are no doubt useful safeguards against the illusions of captivated feeling; yet they do but put off the question 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?' Rules do not fulfil themselves, any more than a statute-book can quell a riot: they need *an executive* to adapt and apply them, and be the depositary of the power which they presuppose and profess to guide. If we go behind these rules and ask 'to whom are they addressed?' 'on what activity, on what judgment do they rely to set them in motion and give them timely application?' we are referred to nothing but the *mind's own essence*,—and *that* after casting out the imagination as a mere passive relation to the external realm: the *conatus of the understanding* towards the realisation of knowledge, with the satisfaction attending its success, is the spring of agency on which all depends, the *primus motor* of the resistance needed; yet not the *primus*,

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for this essence itself is but a necessary mode of another eternal essence, and is what it is in virtue of an attribute of the Absolute. There is therefore no power to execute the rules except the understanding that makes them; and whatever that may be, it is predetermined in the nature of things with no less certainty than the Pythagorean property in the right-angled triangle: it can as little be made greater or less, as the square of the hypothenuse can be made to exceed the squares of the sides. Moreover, what is this *Mind*, whose 'essence' is to put forth the energy? We have been expressly warned against regarding it as more than a mere *ens rationis*, a fiction of logical abstraction, with no other reality than that of the successive ideas, first of the bodily affections and then of their ideas, which spin the phenomenal thread of our life; and we are forbidden to invest it with any '*faculty*,' whether of reason or of will, beyond the happening to us of grouped and serial ideas according to certain laws. How this denial of 'faculty,' i.e. power of doing, can be reconciled with the self-asserting *conatus* for which so much is claimed that it is in fact made to do duty as an *Ego*, remains unexplained. Waiving this, however, we still occupy the position, that the *conatus* of the understanding is the sole agency in moral conflict, and is a determinate quantity, which is not constituted by the person, but constitutes him.

So much for the *active side* in this story of temptation. The *passive feeling* which threatens to enervate it and leave the field to Sense and Imagination, comes from external objects, from the play upon ourselves of natures other than ours. It is, therefore, the expression of *their power*: the *conatus* of *their essence*, which contests the pretensions of our own, and tries to hem it in and mar its development. Since both the rival types are set up as modes out of the same infinite attributes by inevitable deduction, it seems strange that they should clash; each we should expect to have its own full right, without contradicting the other. And *contradict*, in strict sense, it does not: it does not

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question the other's *truth*, but it wants the other's *room and time:* it is not about their eternal coexistence, but about being born into actual existence, now and here, that their quarrel is; and it is only through this competition that timeless essences can limit one another, and the finite spring from the infinite. We are here upon the field of the second kind of causality, the successive *nexus naturæ*, which determines the order of phenomena. Though the links of this order are not logical, like the others, so as to be read *a priori*, but dynamic, discoverable only *a posteriori*, yet are they also adequately assured to us as *necessary*. So that, in every conflict between understanding and passion, the powers really confronting each other are the two causalities, the inner necessity of our essence, and the outer necessity of the finite order of this scene of things. Inasmuch as both of these are unconditionally, though differently, determinate, the resultant of their collision, however hidden, cannot be doubtful: the case is complete in the *conatus* of one nature against the *conatus* of others; beyond which neither can step to modify the predestined award of victory. The opposed natures are alike without originating power, and are but the transmitting media of their respective causalities, the one immanent, the other transitive: each of which has its assignable sequence, modified only by pressure of the other, and never picking up on its way the command of an alternative.

If the determination of character is thus the mere adjustment of two necessities, the diagonal of a parallelogram of forces, it is plain that there is a total failure of all ethical conditions, as distinguished from physical. There can be no obligation to the impossible; and if what we are and do is the sole possibility for us, there can be no duty to be and do anything else. All the sentiments with which we retrospectively regard conduct, approval and disapproval, praise and blame for others, content or compunction of conscience for ourselves, all the awards of justice and institutes of law, are baseless and illusory; and the feeling which is alone

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appropriate to the differences of character is akin to that with which we contemplate differences of temperament and feature. Whatever terms, originally ethical, we may retain, must be thrown, like coins after a revolution, into the melting-pot, and reissued with a new image and superscription, representing, instead of the scales of equity, the laurel of ambition or the half-open flowers of hope: they must all be *prospective*, an artifice of management, to extort, by stimulus of promise or check of deterrent fear, the conduct which we want. But praise administered by way of patronage, indignation pretended by way of preventive, are tricks of discipline, empty of moral affection, and are at best like the beneficent insincerity of the physician who is intent on keeping up at all events the spirits of his patient. I conclude therefore that, in reducing the conflict of affections to a simple trial of strength between two necessities, Spinoza leaves no room for a doctrine of Duty, and renders morality possible for man, only in the sense in which you may predicate it of a horse.

In treating the conflict between feeling and understanding as an encounter of two necessities, I may seem perhaps to misrepresent Spinoza; inasmuch as he claims one of them, viz. the activity of the mind's own essence, as the very type of *Freedom*, and in the last Part of his 'Ethica' selects the phrase 'free man' to designate the subject of this activity. This is true; but the very same relation which is here described as 'freedom' is in the earlier part of the work taken as the true type of '*necessity*.' For it is nothing else than his 'geometrical' nexus, the immanent sequence of the explicit from the implicit contents of a defined essence, which is the vital root of all his philosophy; and it is to this that he resorts whenever he wants the most impressive illustration of necessity. The essences of things emerge from the Divine attributes, the properties of men from the essence of humanity, with the same 'necessity' that equalises the radii of a circle, and determines all modes to follow from 'the nature of God.' That all nature is a scheme of neces-

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sity, and that we are but items in nature, is the main thesis of the whole philosophy. The self-development, then, of the mind's essence is but an instance of this inevitable sequence; and if there be any sense in treating 'freedom' as opposite or different, it excludes freedom. The fact is that, so long as Spinoza is treating only of his first type of causality (the immanent) as if that were all, the idea of necessary sequence has its own way in his mind with absolute dominance: he has no relation to consider except that between datum and inference. But, as soon as he alights upon a second type of causality, which is not deductive, and which determines not essences but existences, he has to consider in addition their synchronous relation to each other; this is one of mutual interference on the field of time; the essence of a thing cannot always fully express itself in actuality; and actual existence cannot be given to what the essence forbids. What shall he call this new relation,—this interruption of previously unhindered sequence? He can find no word for it but '*necessily*;' so we have 'necessity' submitted to 'necessity;' in contra-distinction from which its first state, prior to this submission, is now called its *Freedom*. Each cause is *free* when let alone by any other; it is but then also that its sequences are absolutely *necessary*. Thus it comes to pass that both epithets are applied to one and the same process.

Of this usage I have two remarks to make: (1) If, to be free, a cause must be left in sole occupancy, and abandoned to its own necessity, nothing is free; and for Spinoza to speak of '*the free man*' is an inconsistency; since, in his view, the 'mind's own essence' can never be in sole occupancy: man is an object in nature, as well as a being in himself; nor can there be any *separate action* of the two causalities, which converge upon him as an extended and as a thinking nature: they must always be concomitant. (2) This use of the word 'free' is peculiar to the determinists, and is tantamount to a *petitio principii* on behalf of their doctrine. The term was certainly intended to mark a

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feature which is special to rational and moral beings, and which is not theirs in common with stones and raindrops and carbon and oxygen. If ever we say that these substances are *free* to fall, or to combine, we certainly employ it in Spinoza's sense, of the *absence of hindrance;* but we are conscious of using it in another sense, when we say Peter in denying his Master *abused his freedom*. We still mean that there was *nothing to hinder;* but 'nothing to hinder'—what? Not, as before, some single thing, alone possible to the nature, but *either of two*, both of which are alike possible to the agent,—to tell the truth or to tell the lie. And it is to express this disjunctive option that the word has been evoked; its extension to cases purely physical, where there is no choice, is figurative and secondary; and were this derivative meaning set up as the only one, a familiar experience of human nature, the power of alternative causation, would stand as a vacant place, unmarked and dumb. Deprived of 'speech and language' in which to tell its tale, it slips out of notice and is ruled out of existence.

There is thus no provision in Spinoza's universe for *personal causation*, or command of an alternative, or action *for an end* as distinguished from action *from a force*. Both his types of causality, notwithstanding their difference, agree in being '*efficient causation*,' in which the determining element is wholly out of the past, and the appearance of *two possibles* is stripped off as illusory, and nature is exhibited as having already chosen *one*. He thus removes the essential postulate and possibility of morals, and reduces the differences of character to the same footing with differences of health or beauty. As Trendelenburg remarks (though in a slightly different connection), 'Spinoza certainly takes a noble direction in his ethical conceptions; but if they are to hold good and be ratified, they must be more deeply grounded in human nature[1].'

[1] Historische Beiträge zur Phil. B. II. p. 100.

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§ 13. *Destination of the Human Mind.*

We have seen that Spinoza claims, as the crowning glory of the intellectual love of God, that it is 'eternal;' and as, in doing so, he contrasts with it parts of our mental nature which perish with the body, he seems for once to use this epithet as synonymous with 'immortal.' The proposition thus opens a wider question than the ethical rank of the intellectual love, viz. Spinoza's doctrine of Death, and the real meaning of the distinction which he draws between what it leaves and what it takes away. Does he affirm immortality for the individual mind, i.e. a conscious continuance of intellectual activity and affection? Nothing more plainly attests the obscurity of his philosophy than the opposite answers to this question given by his chief interpreters. Camerer has no doubt that he meant to insist on the immortality of the individual soul; and in this he does but enforce by new reasons the prevailing judgment of earlier critics. Pollock, on the other hand, comes to the aid of Lotsij,—the vigorous Dutch Spinozist,—in maintaining the opposite opinion, which had already, on other grounds, been held by Van der Linde and Sigwart. Between these extremes appear a number of critics in suspense, who are content, like Kirchmann, with contrasting Spinoza's philosophical immortality with the Christian spiritual faith, and saying that the former is good for nothing, from the defect of moral interest and the virtual merging of personality. Of recent interpreters Camerer appears to me to reason most closely from the *loca probantia* of his author's text; and if he fails to convince me, it is chiefly because he is too generous in crediting Spinoza with rigorous consequentiality, and so supposing that he must mean exactly that which, to be consistent, he ought to have meant. This is never a safe assumption for a commentator to make; and in the present instance is rendered the less secure, because Spinoza had already committed himself, both in his 'Cogitata Metaphysica' and the 'Short Treatise' in the hands of

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his disciples, to a more sympathetic treatment of the doctrine of immortality, which he might naturally desire rather to qualify than to retract; and because his extreme caution, not simply personal but from tenderness and reverence towards others, undoubtedly led him into degrees of reticence and disguise of speech hardly compatible with uniform consistency. We shall proceed with the safest steps in quest of his real thought, if we attend first to his earlier doctrine; next, to the features of our nature which he excludes from survival; and then endeavour to estimate the kind of 'eternity' which is intelligibly predicable of the rest.

In the 'Cogitata Metaphysica' he reasons thus: 'Since it clearly follows from the laws of nature that a substance cannot perish, either of itself or through any other created substance, as I have already, if I mistake not, abundantly proved, we are constrained to lay down that, by the laws of nature, the soul is immortal. And on still closer insight into the matter we shall be able most plainly to prove that it is immortal. For, as just shown, the immortality of the soul clearly follows from the laws of nature. Now the laws of nature are decrees of God, revealed by natural light.' 'Next, the decrees of God are immortal, as we have shown. From all which we clearly conclude that God has made known to men His immutable will concerning the duration of the soul, not only by revelation, but also by natural light.' 'Whence' (he says, after removing an unimportant objection) 'it is a most evident certainty that minds are immortal[1].'

Here, there cannot be the smallest doubt, the doctrine avowed is that which is usually understood by the phrase 'the immortality of the soul.' Nor is there any reason for supposing that the argument for it, founded upon the Cartesian admission of thought to the rank of *Substance*, was a mere *accommodation* to a discarded philosophy. The work in which it occurs, though elucidating Descartes' principles, does so by fresh and independent thoughts, which are entitled to the presumption of sincerity; nor would a mere

[1] Cog. Met. II. c. xii. Vol. II. 502.

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expositor interlard his explanation with gratuitous professions of personal confidence in proofs which, all the while, he deemed to be invalid. His belief, therefore, during his first philosophical period, is exposed to no fair doubt.

In the 'Short Treatise,' 'De Deo,' &c. a different path is taken, but apparently to the same point. If we accept as Spinoza's the note at the opening of the Second Part, the soul is now 'no substance,' but only a *mode* of the attribute of 'thinking,' as the body is a mode of 'extension.' Now one body is distinguished from another, only by its particular ratio of molecular motion and rest, assumed, in the case of the human body, to be that of one to three: so long as this ratio, notwithstanding partial changes, remains true of the aggregate of constituents, the identity of the body is undisturbed; but as soon as the changes are such as to break it, the body becomes another, i.e. in the case of man, *dies*. Further, the idea or knowledge of a body is its soul, which undergoes, as a thinking modus, exactly parallel changes to those of the body: 'so that the death of the body is the annihilation of the soul, so far as it is a knowledge of a body provided with a certain given proportion of motion and rest.' But, then, our soul knows something else than the body: 'it is a mode in the thinking substance; so that it has this also, besides the substantive extension, as object of knowledge and love; and by uniting itself with this, it can render itself eternal[1].' Here Spinoza, it is plain, saves the soul by some second relation from the fate which would be involved in the extinction of the first: but there is some doubt what this second relation really is. We may understand it thus: on the death of the human body, the idea of it (i.e. the soul) perishes: but the human body, on losing its constitutive ratio of motion and rest, ceases, not to be *body*, but only to be *human:* it becomes *another* body; and with it, its *idea* ceases, not to exist, but only to be *that particular idea:* it becomes *the idea of another body*. For, the thinking attribute of which it is a mode is infinite and

[1] De Deo, &c. P. II. Pref. note, Vol. II. 299.

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eternal, like the extended with which it is concomitant and parallel; and as one extended thing only changes into another, so, along with it, does its idea only change into another, passing from mode to mode of its own attribute, without losing the character of an idea or soul. It is obvious, however, that if this immortality by metamorphosis of identity were all that is meant, it would be predicable, not of our soul in any distinctive sense, but of the souls universally with which Spinoza endows the corporeal objects in the world.

I cannot persuade myself that he means to palm off this barren form upon his readers as a doctrine of human immortality: I prefer to find in his words another meaning which they not only will bear, but plainly require, unless the verbs *know* and *love* are to be stripped of their proper essence. We have already shown how the alleged parallelism between extension and thinking has to give way in favour of the latter, because, while each extended thing has but a single companion in its idea, each idea is doubly attended, apprehending at once both the extended thing and also itself, the former as a mode of one attribute, the latter as a mode of the other. In virtue of this difference, the soul knows, not only the particular phenomena of which it consists, and the particular bodily phenomena in correspondence with them, but the common properties of all these phenomena in their respective kinds, i.e. extension itself as the essence of body, and thinking as the essence of soul: in other words, God, in His cognisable attributes. To *know* is, in Spinoza's view, to be *united with* that which is known; its 'formal' essence becomes 'objective' in our thought, involving also *love*, as a satisfaction of the rational *conatus*, together with the idea of its cause. Under the influence of these preconceptions, he sets up in the 'Short Treatise' the bold principle, that if the object known and loved is eternal, so must be the soul that knows it: their intellectual union secures to them that common predicate. And this is what he means when he says that, 'in knowing and loving think-

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ing substance, the soul so unites itself to this as to render itself eternal.' Add to this, that the object of possible knowledge is infinite, and therefore the growth of understanding unlimited; and the key is found to the following passage: 'it is to be further remarked that only love, &c. is exempt from limits, i.e. will become more and more excellent the more it increases, since it is directed upon an infinite object; on which account it can grow for all eternity, —a property to be found in nothing else. And this perhaps will hereafter furnish us with matter, whence to prove the immortality of the soul, and in what way this can be realised[1].' This promised proof is presented in the twenty-third chapter, and stands thus: to find the duration of the soul you have only to consider what it is, viz. an idea in the thinking attribute of the All arising from the existence of something present in nature. The duration or change of this thing will give you the duration or change of the soul. Is it only the perishable body? then the soul will perish too. Is it something unchangeable and permanent? So too will its companion be; for the soul united with the imperishable has no cause of perishing, either intrinsic or extrinsic[2]. This doctrine, that 'union with God' confers immortality, certainly looks at first like a new argument for the same conclusion which, in the 'Cogitata Metaphysica,' is drawn from the substantive nature of the soul; the only difference being that now the persistence of the soul is treated, not as inherent, but as dependent on the persistence of its object. It would even appear that we have here a deeper religious element; instead of a mere metaphysical continuity, a personal union of the human spirit with the Divine, of far richer significance. This appearance, however, dissolves away, as soon as we quit the general proposition, and press for an exact account of its two component terms that name the members of this 'union:' what does Spinoza here mean by 'God?' and what by the 'Soul?'

[1] De Deo, &c. P. II. xiv. Vol. II. 326, 327.
[2] Ibid. P. II. xxiii. Vol. II. 353.

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By the former, he means simply the universal base of nature, its real as opposed to its phenomenal characters, its two eternal 'attributes' with all that they necessarily imply, i. e. the whole matter of exact knowledge. By the latter, he means the '*idea*' of this, considered as its reflection, wherever found: not as *your* idea, or *mine*, or as otherwise *appropriated*, for it is all *one in itself*, however often broken or distributed in finite consciousness; and a right thought in a million people is still a single truth or true idea. When Spinoza speaks, therefore, of 'our understanding' or 'soul,' and attributes to it immortality, he refers, not to the individual sample of our thinking nature, but to that nature itself. 'Your Will' (or understanding) 'and mine,' he says, 'are one and the same, and so we constitute one and the same nature, which is in continuous agreement throughout[1].' And the 'power of tasting union with God' he explains by the equivalent expression, 'the power of evolving true ideas[1].' When these substitutions are made, to what does the doctrine amount, that the soul is an idea in the thinking attribute, and abides or perishes according as its object-matter is permanent or transitory? Simply to this, that *true thought will stand the test of time;* and Spinoza may well say, that 'he has proved, in a way different from previous methods, the eternal and persistent duration of our understanding[2].' The human understanding, having been identified with reality itself turned into idea, and reality being God, both share the same eternity. This is an immortality which, it is plain, has nothing to do with the individual's history, and could never be propounded by a believer in personal continuance beyond death. Sigwart, admitting this, still thinks that the earlier chapters which I have quoted maintain the doctrine in the ordinary sense, and are thus at variance with the later, which make much nearer approaches to the 'Ethica[3].' I do not see the need

[1] De Deo, &c. P. II. c. xxvi. Vol. II. p. 362.
[2] Ibid. P. II. c. xxvi. Vol. II. p. 363.
[3] Spinoza's Neuentdeckter Tractat. p. 83.

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of charging this inconsistency on Spinoza. Though he recedes more and more, as his treatise advances, from the stereotyped form of doctrinal language, and having given the key to his thought, clothes it more freely in his own terms, yet the older formulas are all along meant, I am persuaded, to carry *his* sense, and not their own; and their promise to the eye and ear rapidly vanishes under close cross-questioning. He does not really establish on his principle more than this: viz. that so long as there is *being*, there will be *ideas*; so long as there are *ideas*, there will be self-conscious understanding; i.e. knowledge is as imperishable as truth.

Turning to the 'Ethica,' let us now notice the parts of our nature which he surrenders to the fate of the body. To appreciate the value of his profession 'Non omnis moriar,' we must press him to tell us how much is to be covered by the funeral pall. (1) *Imagination* vanishes in death; for it is through the affections of our body that we conceive the existence both of other bodies and of our own, and of their phenomena as actual: when the corporeal organism is gone, the apparition of actually existing things totally vanishes[1]. (2) *Memory* also is wiped out; for it is but the concatenation of images of things outside the body, retained through the affections of our own; and when the retaining tablet is broken, the record is irrecoverably lost[2]. (3) *Love* towards God, the most constant of all affections, must nevertheless, so far as it is referred to the body, be destroyed with it[3]. What is meant by the qualifying clause, 'so far as it referred to the body?' I suppose, 'so far as it is a *personal feeling*, belonging to a finite *Ego*.' The word 'affection' properly meant with Spinoza only *a bodily change* attended by feeling. In extending it afterwards to the 'intellectual love of God,' he did not intend to carry over into this application the

[1] Eth. V. xxi.

[2] Ibid. V. xxi. with II. xviii. Schol.

[3] Ibid. V. xx. Schol.: Concludere possumus hunc erga Deum amorem omnium affectuum esse constantissimum, nec, quatenus ad corpus refertur, posse destrui, *nisi cum ipso corpore*.

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emotional feature of an affection, but to guard against the notion of mere *contemplative intellectuality*, and preserve the idea of *active tendency* able to satisfy itself. Hence, the 'love of God' has affinities, on the one side, with the emotional susceptibilities of the individual life, with its personal memories and gallery of images; and, on the other, with the pure understanding and its *conatus* towards more perfect knowledge of necessary truth. In the former aspect it is the predicate of an individual, is different in each of us, and is 'referred to the body;' in the latter, it is the predicate of intellect universally, and goes wherever it goes, being impersonal and unsusceptible of appropriation; 'it is referred to mind alone.' If this be the true interpretation, the love of God, as personal affection, drops with the body. (4) Besides these features, which are expressly placed upon the perishable list, we must, by inevitable inference, similarly mark for extinction all characteristics of different human beings by which they are distinguished from each other, with the single exception of the particular gradations they may respectively have reached on the homogeneous ladder of necessary knowledge. For, varieties of genius, of skill, of invention, of enthusiasm, are all dependent on imagination, on memory, on affection, even on bodily temperament; and if, as we are assured, 'the eternal part of the mind is understanding, while that which perishes is imagination[1],' all these rich varieties of type become the cast-off clothes of the surviving humanity[2].

Now the question must be determined, What kind of existence, describable as an identical continuation of the human mind, remains for us, after these exclusions have been made? Can we form any 'distinct and adequate idea' of the residuary heir of 'eternity?' If to abstract the understanding in its essence from sense and imagination has been already difficult, for the present life, where these depreciated functions

[1] Eth. V. xl. Cor.
[2] See Camerer, p. 121, who draws this same inference.

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can at least play the pædagogue to their future superior, and bring into its presence the bodies it has to reckon with and analyse ere it can begin to learn its 'eternal' lesson, and where, therefore, by successive training, the understanding may be supposed able to set up for itself at last; how are we to think of it, after it has buried its companions, and survives alone, remembering nothing, bereft of its own body, and neither perceiving nor imagining any other; able to reason, if it only had memory for the premisses; having intuition for 'single things,' except that they must be 'eternal,' of which there are no more than two (extension and thinking); 'loving God,' i.e. trying eternally to find the point in which these eternal parallels unite. Difficult, however, as these conditions are, they have not deterred Camerer from affirming that, for this remnant of the human mind 'personal self-consciousness is claimed;' and the reasons which are conclusive with so thorough a critic deserve respectful consideration. These may be reduced to three:

(1) Self-consciousness is treated by Spinoza as inseparable from every idea; and whoever has a true idea knows that he has it, and cannot doubt its truth. To adequate and true ideas he attributes survival beyond death: certainly, then, not without the attendant self-consciousness. Yes, I grant it; wherever the true idea continues to exist, *there* will also be found its inseparable self-consciousness: but this tells us nothing, till we know whether he who *now has it* is the same as *its former possessor* who is now dead. There is an ambiguity here in the word Self which may deceive us: is it that the idea carries in it a consciousness of *its* self? or is it that the idea carries in it a consciousness of *my* self? if the former, it does not matter in what personality, or in how many, the idea has its continuity; it is still true to its self-reflection. It is only in the latter case that 'personal self-consciousness' is involved. Now the premisses of this argument have the former meaning: the conclusion is drawn in the latter. When Spinoza speaks of

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the 'human mind,' and analyses its nature so as to part the transient from the permanent, we shall miss his conception if we suppose him to be thinking of an *individual sample* of that mind and not of its generic essence and character: and especially when he deals with only its adequate ideas of immutable realities, he ignores the distinction between this and that individual, and treats 'the human understanding' as *one organ* of necessary truth. Let a reality be eternal, its idea will be eternal; and that idea, wherever present, will know itself to be true. This seems to me to satisfy the requirements of Spinoza's language.

(2) Appeal is further made to the following positions of Spinoza's: the 'idea of the idea must no less belong to God than the idea itself: if the idea itself belongs to God considered as constituting the human mind, i.e. if it is in the human mind, so too must be the idea of it; or the self-consciousness connected with it must be in the human mind[1].' Now the surviving adequate ideas *are* in the human mind, belonging to its essence; so therefore must be the self-consciousness connected with them, and share its 'eternity.' The conclusion here again appears to me to be invalidated by the same considerations. To say that the idea's self-consciousness, as well as the idea itself, must be 'in God,' means only that it must be in existence: given the idea, its reflection is given. If, in particular, it is given in the human mind, so then is the self-consciousness of it. Applying this rule to the surviving adequate ideas, we must grant them a self-conscious survival as necessary or eternal truth. No doubt; but in what personal specimen of 'the human mind?' of what thread of self-consciousness are they a continuation? Do they acknowledge their relationship to John Thomas, their *ci-devant* subject, whose total history is blotted out and in the dark? Can they be said 'to survive,' or to 'continue' anything, when there is no Past, and time and phenomena have vanished, and put an end to identity between things now and then? If a true

[1] Eth. II. xliii.

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idea is the same, and its consciousness of truth the same, always and everywhere, if this is the very meaning of its being *necessary* or *sub specie eternitatis*, it is eternal irrespective of personality, just as the equality of vertical angles is a known eternal truth, whether in Euclid's original Greek or translated and 'surviving' in English. Spinoza, it should be remembered, habitually gives unity to the totality of human understandings by calling them 'the eternal and infinite intellect of God [1],' and treats each mind, not as an integer, but as *part* of this infinite intellect [2]: for the eternity of an idea therefore it is, for him, quite indifferent in *what part* of this infinitude that idea may 'survive.' Whoever duly weighs the significance of this doctrine will find in the evidence produced no affirmation of conscious personal identity preserved through death.

(3) Yet another argument is constructed thus: the base of all the necessary knowledge (*sub specie eternitatis*) which constitutes the surviving part of the mind is described as *the knowledge of the essence of the human body*. Now the knowledge of the human body is also the idea which gives self-consciousness of the mind; therefore that self-consciousness must attach to the surviving part of the mind. This argument has one advantage over its predecessors, viz. that if it holds good, the *Self* of which it establishes a consciousness is not of an *idea*, but of an *Ego*, viz. of the individual mind which belongs to the individual body. But I fear it does *not* hold good; the premisses being spoiled by an ambiguous middle term; the 'knowledge of the body' which is the foundation of necessary intellection is not the 'knowledge of the body' which gives the personal self-consciousness: the former is a knowledge of the *essence* of the body [3],

[1] Eth. V. xl. Schol.: Mens nostra, quatenus intelligit, æternus cogitandi modus est, qui alio cogitandi modo determinatur, et hic iterum ab alio et sic in infinitum; ita ut omnes simul Dei æternum et infinitum intellectum constituant.

[2] Ibid. II. xliii. Schol.: Mens nostra, quatenus res vere percipit, pars est infiniti Dei intellectus.

[3] Ibid. V. xxix.

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i.e. of *extension*, which is the essence of all body, and in apprehending which we apprehend an infinite and eternal attribute of God: the latter is a knowledge of the *actual body*, as an *individuum*, carrying with it a similar apprehension of its concomitant idea, or mind, *as an individuum*[1]. The one is absolutely simple; the other is very complex: the one contains only what is *common to all:* the other, the contents of a *res singularis;* and, what is more, it is in virtue of this very difference that the eternal idea attaches to the one, and the individual self-consciousness belongs to the other. Instead, therefore, of these two consequences becoming linked together by the premisses, they are actually kept asunder by them. Spinoza, it is true, elsewhere tells us of a knowledge which the mind may have of itself precisely analogous to this knowledge of the body, viz. 'under the form of eternity;' but the effect which he attributes to it is something quite different from individual consciousness,—rather opposite to it: 'our mind,' he says, 'so far as it knows itself and its body under the form of eternity, has necessarily the knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God, and is conceived through God[2],' i.e. is a finite and phenomenal undulation of the infinite attribute of thinking.

On the whole, therefore, I believe that the disappearance of the word 'immortal' from the 'Ethica' has its full significance, so far as Spinoza himself is concerned; though the obscurity in which his thought is wrapped was probably not undesigned, but in accordance with the half-esoteric purpose of the whole treatise. The substitution of the word 'eternal' involved one inconvenience, which did not escape his attention. When it is employed, as in the connection we have been examining, to express *post-existence*, it is impossible to forget that it no less involves *pre-existence*. Yet Spinoza has throughout treated of the mind's beginning, of its growth, both as recipient and as active, nay, of its *gaining* these very ideas which, as *sub specie eternitatis, belong to*

[1] Eth. II. xv. [2] Ibid. V. xxx.

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it as eternal, and constitute it eternal. His psychology has been accommodated to the self-consciousness, with which his metaphysics are at variance. To which then does he at last adhere? He tells us plainly that the former is framed, for convenience of exposition, on a fictitious hypothesis, the misleading effect of which the reader can avoid by cautious allowance [1]: i.e. that the metaphysics, or *doctrine of being*, must be applied to correct the *doctrine of knowing*. This is tantamount to treating personality and its consciousness as illusions, and replacing them, as sources of knowledge, by the assumption of universal and eternal necessity and the deduction of all that follows from it. At all events, so far as the human understanding is concerned, it is evident that if, by deserving the epithet 'eternal,' it is saved from *perishing*, it is equally rescued from *origination*. Van der Linde well sums up his review of these curious propositions in the following sentence: 'the immortality of the mind is here only apparently deduced by Spinoza. For (firstly), it is not the mind, but a *somewhat* (*aliquid*), which he calls (secondly), not immortal, but eternal, and *that* without memory. This *somewhat* is literally an *incognitum quid*, and this eternity no immortality; for it is not the higher and continuous unfolding of the subjective life. Spinoza explicitly professes to have meant, by the word "eternity," not endlessness, but absolute timelessness. Eternity, not of a given Subject, but of that subject's idea of God (though in Spinozism it is an inconsequence to speak of a *Subject*), means only the eternity of Substance and its ideas. With Spinoza, individualisation, being the ideal stamp of the personal, and therefore the determinate, is *negation*, and, involving as such *temporal non-being*, *cannot involve eternal being* [2].'

I cannot refrain from adding, as a negative corroboration of this judgment, that nowhere in Spinoza's letters, in the

[1] Eth. V. xxxi. Schol.

[2] Spinoza, seine Lehre und deren erste Nachwirkungen in Holland, p. 75.

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reports of his conversation, or in the description of his personal traits, does any trace appear of an expectation beyond this life, though he passed through private sorrows and public dangers which could hardly leave such a thought, if it was there, entirely dumb. And among the disciples who gathered around him in his lifetime, and continued afterwards to represent his school, the same silence may be observed. Even when his philosopher's mantle fell upon a far different personality, upon the tender and devout Schleiermacher, the blank upon the future remained, or was relieved only by a mystic cloud that tried to hide it with a hollow glow. I point to this feature in the history of the school, not in the least as a reproach, but simply to show that the interpretation which I have given is consonant with the thought of Spinoza's most intimate admirers.

§ 14. *Place of Spinozism, and Bearing on Ethics.*

In our preliminary grouping of Metaphysical systems, we contrasted the *Transcendental* with the *Immanental* by referring to the relative *Range* of the assumed primary Entity and of its phenomenal manifestations; the former treating it as in excess of them; the latter, as coincident with them. Spinoza's doctrine was selected as the best representative type of the latter, in conformity with the universal estimate of its essential character. Without at all withdrawing it from this position, which to all intents and purposes it practically holds, I may notice, for exactness' sake, a feature of it which might seem to claim for it a place in the other category. The Cosmos, i.e. *our* Cosmos, the total Nature of which we can speak, not only is provided for by the parallel attributes of extension and thinking, but is all that they have done: they are the immanent cause of its entire contents, which at the same time leave none of their causality unexpressed. If at this point Spinoza's doctrine came to an end, its place among systems would define itself sharply enough. But he goes on to say, that, besides this pair of

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attributes, the Substantive unity has an infinite number inaccessible to us and unexpressed in our universe. Here then we are required to think of an outlying margin of causal being, to which no actual effects, but only possible, are assigned; and this is precisely the feature which characterises a theory as *transcendental*. Have we then misplaced Spinoza? and ought we, in virtue of this vast reserve of Divine power, to have associated him with Plato? By no means; and that for two reasons: (1) his unlimited store of anonymous attributes is a mere logical adjustment, needed in order to equalise his Substance, when *explicitly taken in terms of its attributes*, with the same Substance in the unity of its definition: having there called it 'absolutely infinite,' he could not leave the number of its attributes finite. But, having thus saved his consistency, he makes no use of the vacant infinitude which he has provided: it never appears upon the scene of his theory; but remains just as unemployed as the gods whom Epicurus, on the pretence of consulting for their ease, complimented and bowed out of existence. It is, therefore, permissible, in estimating the working influence of the theory, especially in its ethical relations, to treat this retired element as though it were not. (2) But further: if any of these overlapping attributes came forward so as to be reckoned with, they would bring with them a proportionate addition to the cosmos, and maintain the equation between the actual and the possible. And it is the same, Spinoza would tell us, in their existence behind the scenes: from each of their essences, whatever it is, follows the train of derivative natures with their properties, just as, for us, the manifold laws of body and mind flow from extension and thinking: only, their province in the universe is dark to us, as ours perhaps is dark to them. This supplementary conception, which reinstates the immanental character, is no doubt true to Spinoza's thought: but, for want of it, his doctrine has the appearance of giving an infinite enlargement to the original Substantive Being, beyond the requirements of the cosmical aggregate of phenomena.

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We must let Spinoza stand where his real thought, and not where this mere semblance, would place him.

A different *fundamentum divisionis* for Metaphysical Systems, not by the *range* but by the *quality* of their First Cause, has been adopted and applied by Trendelenburg, in an admirable essay on 'The Ultimate Difference of Philosophical Systems[1].' All differences of Ontological theory run up, he tells us, into one, expressed in the question, 'Which is first,—*Force*, or *Thought*?' The Materialist postulates the former, to begin with; and whether he lodges it in atoms, or in determinate points of free space, whether he tries to work with it as homogeneous, or starts with given differences, as of attraction and repulsion,—he conceives of it as blind and unconscious; and treats the rise of feeling and intelligence as its ulterior result, far down in the history of its changes. The Spiritualist inverts this order of relation; postulates Mind as primary Agent and owner of Force, and attributes to its intelligent Will the origination and disposition of matter and its phenomenal order, as well as the conscious and thinking beings that make up its organic province. Passing in review the great historic types of speculation, and assigning each to one branch of this alternative, Trendelenburg arrives at Spinoza's, and finds it refractory to his disposing hand. If he had begun with Extension, he would have sided with the Materialists; if with Thinking, with the Spiritualists: but, as his Substance is *both*, he refuses an advantage to either, and makes them look up to a *tertium quid*, which is neither Mind nor Matter, but an anterior x, which transcends their antithesis. Spinoza thus occupies a balanced position, outside the Dual classification: so that you cannot apply to him any of the predicates in current use for characterising contrasted philosophies. This, at least, was his intended peculiarity, by which, if rigorously carried out, he might reasonably hope to baffle conventional criticism. It is shown, however, that

[1] Ueber den letzten Unterschied der philosophischen Systeme. Historische Beiträge zur Philos. II. 1.

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he was unable to maintain the equipoise between the two opposite tendencies; but was obliged (in ways already explained) to give a vast preponderance to the *Thinking attribute* in the genesis of phenomena; and so, in spite of himself, to lean to the spiritual side.

There is a fascinating logical neatness in this estimate: but whether it is wholly true depends on a condition that lies behind the terminology employed. If Spinoza's Extension and Thinking, as attributes of Substance, are synonymous respectively with the Matter and Mind of other systems, Trendelenburg's adjustment is unimpeachable: if not, they do not afford the means of directly comparing his theory with theirs. Now, the evidence is irresistible that the 'attributes' meant, for Spinoza, *not Body and Mind*, but the *prior* whence body and mind were to come,—the *possibility of them and certainty of them as to follow;* and that, in making them 'attributes' of 'Substance,' he intended to destroy their antithesis as a reality, and say that they both grow from one root, and are only relatively different, ontologically the same. They are not yet Matter and Mind; nor can the preponderance of one over the other be treated as any suffrage in favour of the Materialist or the Spiritualist. To see this clearly, it is only necessary to collect a few of the marks by which Spinoza expressly distinguishes his Substance, *quâ* Thinking, from what we mean by *Mind*.

(1) It will not be questioned that *Intention*, or *acting for an end*, is an indispensable feature of Mind; and any philosophy which sets up νοῦς as the source of things resorts to it on this account, because it is a *prescient cause*. But Spinoza absolutely denies to his *Natura Naturans* all action for an end [1], and reduces it to mere blind effectuating power;

[1] Eth. I. Appendix. Commenting upon Spinoza's argument that 'if God acts *propter finem*, he acts from desire and must feel some *want*,' Samuel Taylor Coleridge says (Marginalia to Paulus' Spinoza, Vol. II. p. 72): 'Minime *propter* finem in hoc sensu, sed *cum* fine, nempe quia infinite cogitans est. Hanc vero Appendicem inter infirma Spinozæ ratiocinia audenter statuo, et quæ in omni parte indigentiam sanioris critices aperte testatur. Contra sua ipsius principia affectiones Temporis

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and this, not in the line of *extension* only, but in the *thinking* attribute no less. We need not ask what 'thinking' there can be in 'necessity' pushing on deduction from behind, without pursuing the advance into a *before:* it is sufficient to say that a process so cut off, and stepping unconsciously forward in automatic somnambulism, is not what any one ever meant who supposed the universe evolved from Thought. It amounts at most to the achievement of a *calculating machine*, which certainly turns up the equivalents of thought without thinking; but only because, instead of being an originating cause, it is simply a tool preadjusted by an intelligent agent for the end which it is to elicit.

(2) A more direct indication of the same thing is found in the denial of Intellect and Will to God, and the express restriction of them to the *Natura Naturata*[1]. These, it will not be disputed, enter into the very essence of 'Mind;' and if they have a genesis lower down than the Supreme Cause, that cause is something short of mind; and whatever is included in its infinite 'thinking' attribute is *not* Thought, but an *ignotum quid* which usurps the name.

(3) This is confirmed by Spinoza's remarkable admission that what, in God's nature, is covered by these predicates, is really no more intellect and will, than the dog-star is a barking quadruped[2]. This is only another way of saying, that whoever assigns to God the properties of Mind,—affirming e.g. that 'God is a Spirit,' utters a foolish thing.

(4) When pressed by his disciples, Spinoza explains that by *Intellectus* he means *thinking by ideas;* that this is not only the human mode of thought, but would still belong to *Intellectus*, even if it were infinite; yet does *not* belong to God as *Natura Naturans*, but exclusively to the *Natura*

Post et *Prius* cum Ente eterno commiscet, et Sophistam contra Sophistas agit.' He adds, 'Nowhere does Kant manifest his superiority to all preceding philosophers more convincingly than in this question of Final Causes: vide his Ground Unique for demonstrating the Being of God, and the chapter in his Urtheilskraft.'

[1] Eth. I. xxxi. xxxii. Cor. 2.

[2] Ibid. I. xvii. Schol.

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Naturata[1]. From *Cogitatio*, therefore, as expressing the Divine nature, all *Ideation*, or conscious mental process, is shut out,—all distinction between Subject and Object, all apprehended relations to finite beings. Well might Simon de Vries confess himself at a loss to understand what could be meant by '*Thought not by ideas;*' because he found that, in getting rid of the ideas, he had nothing left. Whether he was satisfied with Spinoza's answer, to this effect,—'of course you haven't, because you are only a *mode*, and ideas are the modal way of thinking; but if you were *res ipsissima*, you really would not miss them,'—we are not told. If he ventured to ask,—'How do you know that?'—it would have been pleasant to see the reply. But, for our present point we learn enough, viz. that *the whole* of what we modal beings mean by *Thought* is absent from the Divine thinking, and must be unconditionally denied of the Substantive Cause.

Against these unambiguous indications I find nothing adduced, except the frequent assertion,—'In God there is' this or that idea; or the inference,—'In God there must be' this or that kind of knowledge or self-consciousness. As, in these cases, the word 'God' is always used of the *Natura Naturata*, these phrases are altogether irrelevant. Where they occur in the *assertive* form, the restriction of their field, if not otherwise evident from the context, is marked by the qualifying clause,—*quatenus aliquo modo affectus*, or, *quatenus per mentem humanam explicari potest:* and where in the *inferential* form, by the fact that the inference is drawn from the parallel course of the two attributes through the modes; evincing that the argument is moving entirely on the plane of derivative being.

When to these express intimations from the Metaphysical side, we add the Moral, or rather unmoral, characteristic, that the lover of God is to expect no return, inasmuch as God, having no affections, neither loves nor hates, it becomes

[1] Epp. VIII, IX. two very instructive letters.

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irresistibly evident that Spinoza's 'thinking attribute,' however preponderant over the extended, involves no ascendency of Mind over Force in his theory of the origin of things, and does not justify us in claiming his vote on the Theistic side of the great controversy. As little can we say, that he holds the balance even between them. He gives to Thought, in any sense which saves the word from an absolute blank, *no* place, great or small, at the Fountain-head of causation, but brings it on to the stage after the opening and among the products of the cosmical drama. His guarded language cannot disguise the fact that, for him, it is not Mind that gives birth to Nature, but Nature that gives birth to Mind. And when that mind comes upon the scene, it is in finite samples only, the aggregate of which, in their true and therefore concurrent ideas, constitutes the only intellectual unity there is,—'the Infinite Understanding' of the world.

So much for the Metaphysical aspect of Spinozism. Though it is foreign to my proper subject to dwell upon its relation to Physics, it may be well to mark, *in transitu*, its chief *lacuna* on this side,—the absence of any coherent doctrine of Causality. Starting with the lines of 'geometrical' sequence, as the proper type of causal necessity, he no sooner alights upon work which this will not do, than he silently sets up another type, *the dynamic order* of physical nature, whereby concrete objects and individual phenomena are successively produced, one out of another *in infinitum*. And this he does without apparently discovering that he has passed *in aliud genus*, and therefore without bringing the two conceptions within the embrace of any common theory.

In its ethical relations, Spinoza's system escapes the inconsistencies of Malebranche by complete surrender to determinism; at the cost, however, as we have seen, of the conception of *Duty*, and of all basis for what are recognised as the proper *Moral Sentiments* of mankind. Identifying the possible with the actual, he finds regret and condemnation for failure of what might have been, and ought to have been, out of keeping with the order of the world. Man is

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a 'spiritual automaton[1];' and nothing can be demanded from him except that which, from moment to moment, he will unfailingly produce. The automaton indeed, if it be out of order, may be mended; provided the neighbouring automata are so constructed and wound up as to get hold of it, and carry the proper tools for opening its inside, and rubbing off its rust, and oiling its joints, and riveting its broken springs: but it can no more mend itself than it can wind itself up. The extension of a mechanical theory of nature to the human mind and life is necessarily fatal to their moral aspect and pretensions, and brings the whole world within the domain of *Physics*. Rather than consent to this, both Plato and Descartes, as we have seen, allow to the mind a self-moving power, which is a mechanical absurdity and a moral certainty. We find them, though aware of the rivalry, coquetting, now with the necessity of nature, now with the liberty of man; not pretending to reconcile them, but resolved to let no logic snatch away half the beauty of the world. The intellectual Puritanism of Spinoza could least of all bear a divided allegiance. He cared little what world he lived in, provided it were only *one*. Even the two eyes given wherewith to look at it disturbed its unity too much for him; and to secure the simplicity of a monocular view of it, he drew the lids over the retina most sensitive to the phenomena of conscience and the lights of character, and saw it all as an organism of absolute decrees. In such a universe, all things that are have equal right to be;—except, indeed, our approval of them, or disapproval, which alone are out of place.

[1] De Intellectus Emend. Vol. I. p. 29. The expression is probably suggested by Descartes' *Passions*, § 16, where the idea is limited in its application to movements of the body and the 'Animal spirits,' which take place without the will. Spinoza extends it to the whole nature.

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BOOK II.

PHYSICAL.

COMTE.

THE philosophers hitherto examined have concurred in recognising a permanent ground and eternal entity from whose essence all else is derived. They have further assumed that this absolute ἀρχή is cognisable by our faculties, and indeed is the proper object of their highest quest; that, when found and realised in thought, it is the true key to the interpretation of whatever lies around or within us; and that only in so far as it is thus apprehended and applied, can we be said to have *knowledge*, or to exercise that intellect which is our distinctive prerogative. They agree moreover in identifying their ultimate principle with *God*, so as to make the province of knowledge conterminous with that of religion. In both Schools, the order of actual development is represented as taking place from the superior to the inferior, from the more perfect whole to the less perfect instance: in Plato higher thoughts, in Spinoza more comprehensive powers, are the source of whatever is individually presented to experience, and are the means by which we understand it. It is by participating in the original intellectual factor of the universe, that man is able to comprehend himself and the scene in which he is placed. So that, every way, the absolute is interpreter to the relative, the eternal to the temporal, the cause to the effect, the

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hyperphysical to the physical, the logical to the perceptible. Whether, with Plato, we assign to this higher principle an existence out beyond the originated universe in space and time, or, with Spinoza, treat the *Naturans* and *Naturata* as coextensive, makes indeed many important differences in result and application; but none in this respect, that our ultimate faith reposes upon an *ontological* foundation.

The system to which we now address ourselves denies all these propositions, and reverses every postulate which has hitherto remained undisturbed. *Being*, as distinct from *appearance*, is not a higher reality, but an empty fiction; and, were it otherwise, would be wholly beyond our cognisance. Human reason has no other object than phenomena, which it may register in their succession and coexistence; but all enquiry after their *causes* is an illusory play of imagination. What the earlier systems described as the sole business of philosophy is here regarded as the special sign of unreason; and the empirical processes which in their view fell short of the proper aim of human intelligence are here constituted the essence of all knowledge. That which is nearest to Sense has priority in certainty, as well as in time of apprehension; and general propositions have no more truth and worth than may be brought into them by the particulars which they consolidate in a single formula. Whatever we are in the habit of opposing to the physical, the relative, the originated,—viz. the hyperphysical, the absolute, the causal,—is a phantasy of thought, and no object of human knowledge, whether first or last. To accumulate facts and detect their order; to apply to them the gauge of quantity; to observe the relations of their laws, and follow the traces of expanding generalisation; constitutes the business of *Science:* while that of *Philosophy* is simply to survey and methodise this process, and exhibit it as the logical *organon* of the human intellect. This doctrine, it is evident, agrees with the schemes of Plato and of Spinoza in approaching Man from the side of Nature beyond him, so that anthropology is but the inner

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circle reached by contracting the circumference of a wider realm. But it differs from them, in limiting itself to the field of observation and induction, and denying all reality *except to phenomena*. Its first requisite for the true philosopher is to rid himself of all notion of Substance as the ground of manifestation, of Causality as the source of effects, and to let the universe resolve itself before him into facts like and unlike, serial and synchronous. Of this doctrine we are fortunate enough to have a thoroughgoing recent representative in M. Comte; and an English interpreter, perhaps of less original genius, but of far more balanced judgment, in J. S. Mill. The latter will most fitly come under review in a future chapter of this treatise. The writings of the former, who made the systematic exposition of the Physical doctrine the business of his life, and projected an ethical and social organism in conformity with it, will naturally furnish us with the best means of delineating its contents and appreciating its character.

I must premise, however, that not every Physical system repudiates metaphysical conceptions as peremptorily as Comte. The notion of *Causation*, if only in the shape of *Force*, and that of *Substance*, if only under the name of *Atoms*, have been so prevailingly retained in the schools of inductive physics, as to have coloured the whole language of natural science, rendered its relations absolutely inconceivable without them, and become responsible for some of its most signal discussions. Boscovich, Dalton, and Grove,—to omit less noted examples,—show that, since the time of Bacon, not less than before, the men most familiar with the experimental sciences have been unable to dispense with the conceptions which Comte insists on banishing. He himself appeals, not only to Bichat and Gall, but to *Thales and Pythagoras*, as his own proper antecedents, and claims to be the modern representative of their intellectual tendency. But the Ionian School presents no feature of resemblance to him, beyond appearing on the same physical field. It expressly aimed

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at the discovery of some one material principle from whose transformations the universe might be evolved; and whether water, air, or fire was assumed, the process through which it was conducted was neither more nor less than a Cosmogony[1]. Unless, therefore, it be simply as practical engineer and mathematician at the Court of Sardes, who computed a solar eclipse and embanked the Halys for King Crœsus, or else as chief of the Seven Sages, I know not how the Ionic philosopher can afford any analogy to the founder of Positivism. Still less does the Doric genius of Pythagoras belong to the same type. Far from proclaiming that phenomena alone are cognisable, he sought to derive them from a higher principle; in selecting which, he passed out beyond the material elements of the Ionians, and pitched upon the relations of Number and Measure, as objects at once of perception and intellect, and fit to mediate, therefore, between the world of matter and of thought. This ascription of causal power and cosmical reality to mathematical entities is the very essence of the Pythagorean philosophy on its physical side. A less inaccurate comparison is afforded by Heracleitus; whose doctrine of the perpetual succession and genesis of things, in reaction from the ontology of Xenophanes which had denied all motion and change, corresponds very nearly with the exclusion by the Positive Philosophy of anything more real than phenomena. But even here we do not find the notion of Causation discarded, or intellectual curiosity content to forego all questions of origination. This School not only observed, but speculated on the genesis of things; deducing it from the conflict of opposites meeting on the same point, and establishing an equilibrium or harmony of positive and negative; and, under the symbol of *fire*, representing the ever-living force or element of motion presupposed in every manifestation of physical change. As in the School of Elea we meet with the doctrine of pure *substantive* reality, so in that of Heracleitus we

[1] See Aristot. Metaph. A. 3. 983 b—984 a.

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encounter that of pure *Force of change;* and since the one afforded no means of establishing an *evolution*, and the other could give no account of its correlative *substratum*, the Atomists sought to combine the two, by domesticating the free force in given indivisible fundamental constituents, discriminated in form but not in attributes. The evolutions of nature were explained by the permutations and local movements of these countless elements; all qualitative difference being resolved into quantitative variety. In all these instances, it is evident how little the genius of ancient philosophy could refrain, on Comte's own field, from the gravest offences against his prohibitory maxims. Even when dealing, like himself, only with Nature and her phenomena, these Schools derived their whole impulse from the desire to pass behind the veil, and explain in their source, as well as dispose in their order, the assemblage of effects. The problems which they attempt to solve are those which Positivism forbids; it is simply in the difference of their solutions to these problems that School is distinguished from School.

It is a curious fact that this philosopher's laurels should be chiefly English. In France and Germany his reputation has not assigned him to the first rank of thinkers; and it is only in recent histories of modern Philosophy that his name has begun to appear. In part, no doubt, this is due to the same causes which so long detained Schopenhauer in unmerited obscurity;—the absence of an Academical position, and, as in the case of the Frankfort recluse, the consequent contempt for all *Professional philosophy*,—a contempt so *sore* as to defeat its own aim, and create a distaste for writings acrid with class antipathies. But the chief cause is to be found in the fact, that, like Bacon, he occupies a position outside of philosophy, and deals not with the laws of thinking so much as with the matter of thought; classifying the sciences according to the properties with which they deal, and giving an encyclopedic view of their relations. Here it is that his large grasp of thought becomes apparent;

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not in any solution of the difficult problems of philosophy, but in a better regulated pursuit of knowledge, and a clearer apprehension of the resources of each instrument of research. Towards psychology, logic, metaphysics, and theology, he presents only a blind or negative side; simply denying their worth or even existence; and as he is content to do this *dogmatically*, without at all entering into their problems, or showing any appreciation of their conditions, he presents no front for attack or discussion on this side; for it is impossible to refute mere oracular contempt. He begins by assuming the postulates of empirical perception; and erects upon that basis, without question of its security, the structure which is to lodge every element of human knowledge. In this respect he differs from Kant, who no less denied the validity of the speculative processes of the metaphysician and theologian; but instead of merely chalking their house as empty, thundering at the door to make a hollow sound, and then running away into more populous streets, he entered with searching patience into the interior, and traced all their winding passages, following their own clues to show whither they would lead. It is the unsupported pretension to legislative universality, involving the arbitrary confiscation of whole provinces of human thought, that provokes resistance to the French dogmatist, and hinders the recognition of his extraordinary merits.

§ 1. *Life and Personality.*

For reasons which will presently appear, the story of Comte's life supplies essential aids to the appreciation of his philosophy; and partly with intention, partly with unconscious self-revelation, he furnishes these in a series of prefaces to his volumes and letters to disciples or public men. The son of a tax-gatherer at Montpellier, he was born, in 1798, into a family equally Catholic and Monarchical[1]; and impervious as he long seemed to this influence, the

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. vi.

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response of his nature to it was rather deferred than absent; and to his mother especially (*née* Rosalie Boyer) he ultimately conceived himself indebted for his essential qualities of mind, as well as of heart and character, though at home he had not loved her as her virtues and misfortunes deserved[1]. At nine years of age he was sent to the local High School,—one of the Lycées which Napoleon had established under prevailing ecclesiastical direction; but whatever profit he gained from his five years' study there, the benefit which he best remembered was, that they 'emancipated him from all theology,' and even made short work with any dabbling in metaphysics, and left him equipped, at fourteen, for a career, on the one hand, of devotion to the definite sciences, on the other, of zeal for political and social regeneration[2]. To the Polytechnic School at Paris, whither he next proceeded, he carried a proficiency in mathematics which enabled him to turn its admirable course of instruction to the best account, and rapidly to reach the borderland of knowledge which, it is generally supposed, exact methods of measurement cannot cross. He felt dissatisfied with such sudden termination of the scientific highway; and cast a longing eye over the ulterior provinces of biology and social law, to see whether some continuous road could not be engineered across them, which should bring them into the same intellectual empire[3]. This presentiment of his future hierarchy of sciences probably found expression in some form too little respectful towards existing ideas and teachers; for in 1816 he incurred expulsion for breach of discipline, notwithstanding his acknowledged merits in the class-room. Thus thrown out of his career, he was expected to take refuge at home: but Paris had spoiled him for Montpellier; and, in spite of his parents' remonstrances, he determined to face the world alone, and, remaining where he was, to seek a maintenance by private mathematical tuition, and in its intervals to work

[1] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 12. [2] Ibid. I. Pref. 6.
[3] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. vii.

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out his still vague conceptions of intellectual and social reconstruction[1]. In the first object he succeeded, to the modest measure of his material wants; the second incurred delay through the interposition, in 1818, of an unfortunate influence which, he confesses, disturbed for a while, without really interrupting, the spontaneous evolution of his thought. He was fascinated by the specious but sophistical pretensions of the Comte de St. Simon[2], and drawn within the circle of his School, in common with Thierry, Rodriguez, Bayard, and Enfantin; and it was at his instigation, and in his Review (*l'Organisateur*), that he produced, in April, 1820, his first published essay, *Sommaire Appréciation de l'ensemble du Passé moderne;* and it was in sequel to St. Simon's *Catéchisme des Industriels*, and under St. Simon's name, that in May, 1822, he printed a hundred copies of his *Plan des Travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la Société*, which, when reproduced two years after, under his own name, received the second title *Système de Politique Positive*, and served henceforth as the intended germ of his future *Philosophie Positive*[3]. Though this essay was declared by St. Simon to present his doctrine of society under too severe and 'Aristotelian' an aspect, and to slight its poetic and religious elements, the disagreement cannot have occasioned any total rupture of the young author's relations with him[4]; for they were prolonged, as he tells us, through six years; and we find Comte still in the interior circle of confidants who surrounded the deathbed of St. Simon on May 19, 1825, and received his warning words, 'Not to suppose that religion can ever die, and to remember that without enthusiasm nothing great can be achieved.' He did not associate himself with the St. Simonian organisation which survived

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. x, xi.

[2] Ibid. Pref. note vii–ix.

[3] Pol. Pos. IV. Append. Pref. Gen. iii. and 4. 47.

[4] See St. Simon's Preface to Comte's Système, Œuvres XXXVIII. Catéchisme, 3me Cahier, closing thus: 'Notwithstanding the imperfections which we find in M. Comte's work, from its satisfying only one half of our views, we formally declare that to us it seems the best production ever published on general politics,' p. 5.

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the founder's death: but his external relation to it cannot have been unfriendly, for during the next year he contributed to its representative journal (*le Producteur*) two considerable essays: viz. in November 1825, *Considérations philosophiques sur les Sciences et les Savants;* and in March, 1826, *Considérations sur le Pouvoir Spirituel*[1]. In the following month he opened, at his private lodgings, the course of lectures which constitute at once his fundamental and his crowning work, before an audience including Alexander von Humboldt, De Blainville, and Poinsot. It sums up, he tells us, the results of his studies since he left the Polytechnique[2]. As the last six of the ten intervening years present him to us in unbroken literary co-operation with the St. Simonians, it is less surprising that they should refer some kindling of his genius to the inspiration of their leader, than that he should resent the claim, and fiercely denounce him as 'a depraved juggler' (*un jongleur dépravé*[3]), who had neither letters nor science, and had done him nothing but mischief, except by confirming his conviction, already obtained from the economists, of the growing social importance of the modern industrial development. It is impossible, at present, to pronounce upon these conflicting assertions of originality; but, to prepare the way, a few words must tell the forgotten story of the St. Simonian sect, so far as it illustrates the relations between the two philosophers.

Its founder (Claude Henri), grandson of the Duke who was the friend of Fénelon and author of the 'Memoirs of the Court of France under Louis XIV. and his Successors,' was born in 1760, and received, from D'Alembert and other eminent teachers, the liberal education due to his rank. A mixed impulse, of generous sympathy and eagerness for personal distinction, carried him at the age of seventeen into the army of Washington in the colonial struggle for independence. The close of the war and the death of his

[1] St. Simon's Preface to Comte's Système, Œuvres XXXVIII. Catéchisme, 3me Cahier, and pp. 137. 177.
[2] Phil. Pos. I. v.; VI. ix, x. [3] Pol. Pos. III. Pref. xv, xvi.

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father in the following year left him free to follow the predominant bent of his nature, viz. 'to study the course of the human mind in order to work for the advancement of civilisation.' But his restless and flighty will seemed incapable of steady purpose; and he frittered away fifteen years and the greater part of his fortune in resultless travels and disappointed projects of industrial reform. Convinced at last that the social regenerator needed a depth of knowledge and a range of experience which he had never gained, he devoted three years' study to the mathematical and physical sciences, and two to the physiological; visiting England and Germany to glean the remaining fragments, but coming to the usual French conclusion that out of Paris there was nothing to be learned. Unhappily, the same logic which had obliged him to master all human knowledge insisted on his also going through all human experience: without a sample of everything, he could judge of nothing. So he spent some further time in impartially trying the varieties of life within and without the limits of the moral law; marriage, soon dissolved; ascetic rigour and Oriental voluptuousness, solitude and revelry, the nursing of health and the voluntary inoculation with loathsome diseases, the ball-room, the gaming-table, the race-course, rapidly completed the philosophical experiment with the exhaustion of his resources; and left him at last, as a Government clerk, qualified to redeem the human race on £40 a year[1].

His earliest pamphlet, indeed, published in 1803 under the title *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains*[2], was not wholly devoted to so sublime an end: it was specially intended to conciliate the favour of the widowed Mme. de Staël, to whom he made in vain the offer of his hand. It traces the revolutionary anarchy of the time to the ever-widening breach between authoritative belief and

[1] Sa vie écrite par lui-même, Œuvres de St. Simon and Enfantin, XV^e^ Vol. pp. 64–88.

[2] Œuvres de St. Simon and Enfantin, Paris, Dentu, 1865. XV^e^ Vol. pp. 7–60.

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demonstrated science, which sets the spiritual power in society at variance with itself, the intellectual with the religious, and disorganises the equilibrium of the world. The medieval period is adduced as the standard example of the opposite condition, in which the representatives of the supreme faith were also the possessors of the total knowledge then attained; and, thus wielding all the forces of spontaneous conviction, could control the passions of men, and determine the path of the temporal power without sharing any of its functions. Such ages of unity in sentiment, with separate depositaries of secular rule, the author calls *organic:* they are times of social order, because the average aspiration is satisfied: they are times of silent growth, because the mass moves all together: they are creative times, because the imagination has free play without any dissent of the reason. But they inevitably resolve themselves by degrees into their own opposites, the *critical* ages, in which the imaginative beliefs consecrated by authority are left behind by the movement of scientific conceptions, and retain only an attenuated and at last a fictitious life. Such an era declared its advent in the convulsions of the French Revolution; undermining the priestly influence by the crumbling away of its necessary base; breaking up the feudal order by the growth and emancipation of industry; throwing to the front, for a transitional term, the ephemeral tribe of metaphysicians to try their vain compromises between the theology of the past and the knowledge of the future; but waiting for a reproduction of the medieval equilibrium, with a spiritual power of scientific priests and a temporal of rich proprietors, and a worship of the laws of nature, and a ceremonial directed by artists, and a supreme council of the *élite* of humanity. When this consummation is reached, the law of labour will be universal: with hand or mind, all must work, and be recompensed according to their works; the associates of the spiritual power being supported at the public cost.

These letters were tolerably complete in their way. But

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the author's next production afforded a signal example of the disproportion between his vast conceptions and his abortive conclusions. Full of an encyclopedic scheme, for an historical and critical account of the progress of the human mind in science and social life during the last century, he published in 1808 a two-volume prospectus entitled *Introduction aux Travaux scientifiques du XIX^me^ siècle*, including in it, by way of quotation, the whole of D'Alembert's celebrated discourse prefixed to the French Encyclopedie[1]. As the project was still-born, its promise is interesting only for the scattered thoughts for which its announcement gave excuse. The author insists that there is an exact parallel, in the stages of human evolution, between the individual and collective society; an infancy, a youth, a manhood (and, alas! a decline), in nations, as in each person: they first treat outward things as animate, like themselves; thence pass into a polytheistic mythology, and forward into monotheism; till the discovery of order among phenomena substitutes the conception of Law, and relieves supernatural causes of their function. But this last step cannot be taken except slowly, and unequally by differently prepared minds; and the transition will not be effected without a metaphysical Deism, gradually attenuated till it fades away before universal Physics. It deserves remark that this crowning stage of knowledge is here designated, for the first time, as *La philosophie positive;* Descartes being praised because 'Il a senti que la philosophie positive se divisait en deux parties également importantes: la physique des corps bruts et la physique des corps organisés[2].' In St. Simon's next publication (1813), the *Mémoire sur la science de l'homme*, the phrase recurs in a context which renders its meaning perfectly explicit: 'The tendency of the human mind since the fifteenth century,' he says, 'is to base all its reasonings upon facts observed and discussed;

[1] Op. Cit. XV. pp. 62, 63.
[2] Œuvres Choisies de C. H. de St. Simon, précédées d'un Essai sur sa Doctrine, Tom. I. p. 198.

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and on this positive base, astronomy, physics, and chemistry have already been reorganised. . . . The particular sciences are the constituents of general science; general science, i.e. philosophy, was inevitably conjectural just so far as the particular sciences were so; half conjectural and half positive, when a portion of the particular sciences had become positive, while the rest were still conjectural; and it will be positive throughout, when all the particular sciences are so. This will take place, whenever physiology and psychology shall be based upon facts observed and discussed[1].' Hence, in order to constitute the science of Man, two conditions, which are on the eve of realisation, must be wrought out: it must be shown biologically that, in the individual, mental and moral phenomena are due to his organisation alone; and, historically that, in communities, the course of civilisation follows a law of regular evolution, through which each social state emerges necessarily from its predecessor.

The high appreciation of the medieval period, as *organic*, we have already noticed in the 'Letters from Geneva.' A new reason for it is emphasised in the author's essay on *Universal Gravitation* (1813), which otherwise need not detain us. The middle ages realised for the first time the effective separation of the spiritual and temporal powers; and so supplied a model on which every regenerator of society should keep his eye. To vest in one class all the resources of instruction and persuasion, and in another the exercise of coercive authority, and suffer no encroachment of either on the other, is the prime condition of social order and stability. This favourite conception St. Simon is henceforward never tired of repeating.

Thus far, the speculations of St. Simon had aimed at no more than the improvement of national life, whether in his own or in other lands. But, in 1814, incited perhaps by the enthusiasm of the young Augustin Thierry, now become his collaborateur, he extended the scope of his projects,

[1] Œuvres XL. 17. See also Correspondance avec M. de Redern, Œuvres XV. 108, 109.

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and discussed in an essay 'the reorganisation of European Society, or the means of uniting the various nations of Europe into the political body, and at the same time preserving the national independence of each[1].' He proposed for this end a decennial election of distinguished persons, including a specified number of the leaders in science and philosophy, to act as a European council, for the codification of morals and directing of education, the composing of international disputes, and the improvement of intercommunication. But this federal Reichstag of the ἄριστοι was simply to be superinduced upon the prior legislatures and executives of the separate countries, without disturbing the internal springs of their patriotic life.

In this conception, St. Simon does but expand a slight hint incidentally dropped in the letters from Geneva. The same may be said of another thought which now takes possession of him, and by its growing magnitude demands a serial publication,—*l'Industrie*,—to itself[2]. In the passage of the human mind from the Medieval theology to the Positive sciences, he is struck by the inevitable concomitant change from the feudal military organisation to the system of industrial relations; he assigns to the artisan and labouring classes a social importance which he had not recognised before; and claims that the public economy, and education, and allotment of political rights should be largely directed with a view to their well-being. 'Political science indeed is that which has for its aim to determine the order of things most favourable to all kinds of production.' The issue of this periodical (1816–18), coincided with Comte's first entrance into the author's circle; and he was entrusted with the editing of the third volume. The task, no doubt, helped to fix in him, as he avows, the impression already received from the Economists, of the great part which is reserved for the working classes in the future development of society. He himself, however, contributed nothing to these volumes; and though well affected to their main

[1] Œuvres XV. 153 seqq. [2] Ibid. XVIII. XIX. 13–173.

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object, is in no way responsible for the wild disregard of natural laws often apparent in their methods of pursuing it.

But how does this recognition of a new 'industrial power' settle accounts with the previous demand for a restored 'spiritual power?' For awhile, the two ideas jostled each other in St. Simon's mind, and he wavered about the proper constitution of the temporal government, especially on the question whether the artisan influence should be incorporated with it, or be added on to the force of the intellectual function. It was evident that in the pursuits of industry theoretic science and practical art were inseparably combined, so that the workman's well-being depended at once upon the progress of knowledge and the secular order; of which of them, then, is he to be the organ and ally? To determine this and similar doubts was the main purpose of the successive papers which constitute St. Simon's *Organisateur*, published in 1819–20[1]. Here he transfers the political predominance which he had vested in the territorial classes to the manufacturing producers; leaving to the latter the whole power of ratifying and executing laws and controlling the state finance; but setting over them, as the sole initiative and consultative authority, the representatives of the intellectual professions, whether concerned with Science, Letters, or Art. Thus the temporal power was concentrated in the directors of capital and their subordinates, under the condition of originating nothing and doing everything.

In his two remaining publications, the *Système Industriel*[2] (1821) and the *Catéchisme des Industriels*[3] (1822–24), St. Simon interests himself less about the division of political power among existing classes, than about the unequal distribution of property which makes these classes what they are; and insists upon it as the supreme problem of the State, to rescue the producers of wealth from their anomalous position, as minimum sharers in the good things which they create. From this fate, which he treats as a lingering rem-

[1] Œuvres XX. [2] Ibid. XXI–XXIII. 17–95.
[3] Ibid. XXXVII–XXXIX. 47.

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nant of feudalism, they must be delivered by two essential and inevitable changes: a universal education at the public cost, in schools, first of inorganic science, and then for the study of moral and social laws; and the securing to everyone of remunerative labour in proportion to its worth. In comparing the chance of realising these changes in different countries, he assigns the earliest place to France, which will outstrip England precisely on account of the English parliamentary system, hitherto admired and praised, but now condemned as an obstructive makeshift on the reformer's path. On some of the teaching of the *Catéchisme*, which was to have been a joint production of St. Simon and Comte, eager altercations took place between them, ending, as I have explained, in the combined but distinct publication of their respective parts. On the reproduction of these in 1824, each author added a preface. In that of Comte occur these words: 'Having long reflected on the *idées mères* of M. St. Simon, I have set myself merely to systematise, to develop and complete the portion of this philosopher's views which have relation to the scientific direction. The result has been the formation of the system of Positive Politics which I now begin to submit to the judgment of thinkers. I have thought it my duty publicly to make the foregoing declaration, in order that, if my labours should appear to merit any approbation, it may be passed on to the founder of the Philosophical School to which I have the honour to belong[1].'

During the composition of the *Catéchisme* St. Simon, now sunk into the lowest depths of want, had yielded to despondency and attempted his own life. But the pistol-shot only shattered his face and deprived him of an eye; and he yet lived to put his hand to one other unfinished work. His *Nouveau Christianisme*[2] was intended to conciliate the moral and religious feelings which his antitheological invectives and his statements of social doctrine so often shocked; and to show that human life, when removed to his scientific base of mere anthropologic law, afforded undiminished

[1] Œuvres XXXVIII. 9. [2] Ibid. XXIII. 100–191.

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scope for ethical and reverential affections. He gives it the form of a dialogue between a Conservative and an Innovator; but carried their conversation no further than a preluding review of the past, exposing the wants which the regenerating system was to satisfy. The Divine element of Christianity consists wholly in its statement of human brotherhood, and its consequent care for the physical and moral well-being of the poor: to give effect to this principle is the proper end of all spiritual and temporal power; and for its special embodiment a Church is needed, with a complete organisation of doctrine, ceremonial, and moral code, administered by an adequate hierarchy and a supreme head. These fragmentary hints were denied their development by the author's death, at the age of sixty-five. His followers did something to enlarge them by their expositions; but here ends this significant episode in Comte's life: henceforth, he walks alone.

Comte often adverts with pride, as to a happy crisis in the history of his genius, to his discovery, in May, 1822, and immediate statement in his *Plan des Travaux*, of a fundamental law of the human mind, individual and collective, viz. that, 'in all the branches of our knowledge, it has to pass successively in its progress through three different intellectual states: the theological, or fictitious; the metaphysical, or abstract; and finally, the scientific, or positive:' the first, referring phenomena to supernatural beings; the second, explaining them by abstractions, neither supernatural nor natural; the third, content to reduce them to general laws without travelling beyond the assembled facts themselves. He thus had gained, at the age of twenty-four, the key to the history of each science and the succession of all, and the means of predicting the sequel of such as are mid-way in their career. Whether this law can be unconditionally accepted will be considered hereafter. It is certainly thrown, in this early essay, into a form of expression admirable for its succinctness and precision, and so prepared for the wide application as a formula which it received in

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the *Philosophie Positive*. But the germ of it we cannot miss in the St. Simonian position that mankind constitute a collective being, with progressive development, invariably commencing in a theological stage, and terminating in a positive, through the medium of a disintegrating metaphysical criticism. The law is very differently applied to the course of history by the two writers; but surely in their conception of it they are essentially at one.

The whole structure of the *Philosophie Positive* was determined by this law, which received a masterly exposition in the first *Leçon* of April, 1826. After the third, the course was interrupted by a sudden 'cerebral crisis,'—a 'profond orage cérébral,'—brought on by excess of work and moral suffering, and prolonged, as he affirms, by senseless medical treatment at a private asylum[1]. As soon as he was pronounced incurable and professionally left alone, to be cared for only by his wife and mother, he rapidly recovered; and in August, 1828, after an interval of eighteen months, was able to resume his lectures; and, before he had forgotten his recent experience of medical art, turned it to account in a review of De Broussai's treatise on 'Irritation and Madness.' That his intellectual vigour had fully returned is amply attested by the originality and grasp of thought which characterise his new chapter on the Physical sciences; but that some morbid twist of feeling remained and often recurred, as an uneffaced vestige of that illness, is the mildest explanation which we can give of an extreme suspiciousness henceforth never long asleep towards friend or foe. In the very note which tells the tale of his illness and recovery he charges his old teacher, the eminent geometer Poinsot, with spitefully using against him, to gratify a private enmity, this attack of insanity; a charge which, being refuted by Poinsot's noble conduct afterwards, he had to withdraw with apologies[2].

The wife whose care had put the doctors' prescriptions to shame,—Caroline Massin,—he had married in 1825 by civil

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. x. note.
[2] Ibid. xi. Comp. Discours sur l'Ensemble du Positivisme, Pref. xiii.

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contract. On his restoration to health, one of his first acts was to crown this engagement by adding the religious rite; whether out of concession to her feeling and his mother's, or from any relenting instinct of undefined gratitude, remains unknown. The softened mood, whatever it was, had no durability. His domestic life soon became a burden to him through discordances of disposition, which grew harsher with time; and, after seventeen years, the marriage was dissolved in 1842[1].

The renewed course of sixty lectures was completed during the year 1829; but the process of committing them to writing, which produced the first volume of the *Philosophie Positive* in 1830, extended over twelve years. This long demand on time was not due to laborious study or literary fastidiousness; for Comte tells us that he was no great reader, and knew nothing, in the originals, of the chief foreign writers on his own subjects,—of Vico, or Kant, or Herder, or Hegel,—and never cared to look at the *Journals*, scientific or political: the table of contents of the Academy's transactions was enough for him. Nor did he waste a minute in moulding or mending his composition; but, having thought out his whole scheme and got it under his hand, wrote out everything rapidly and repented of little or nothing[2]. But many an involuntary interruption arrested his work: the Paris revolution of 1830; change of occupation through successive appointments at the Polytechnique in 1832 and 1837; dissensions with objectionable savans; and *res angusta domi*, unrelieved, alas! by patience and harmony.

And when at last, in 1842, he is rid at once of his work and of his wife, new troubles come upon him from the authorities of the Polytechnic School. He had filled two offices there, both of them subordinate, and both subject to annual election; that of *Répétiteur*, or Tutor (from 1832), and that of Examiner of candidates for admission (from

[1] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 8.
[2] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. xxxv–xxxvii. and note.

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1837); neither of them well remunerated, but each acceptable to him as more sparing of his time than private teaching. They had incidentally afforded him a further advantage which he had not contemplated. During a temporary absence of the chief Mathematical Professor in 1836, he had been entrusted with the duties of that important chair, and by his masterly performance of them had earned a reputation with both the Director (Dulong) and the students, which marked him out as its fittest occupant on the next vacancy. When the vacancy occurred in 1840, his candidature, eminently popular in the school, was supported by a majority of the Council (which included the professors), with the approval of its head. But Dulong died at the critical moment, and the smothered jealousy which his authority had suppressed sprang to ascendency; and, unfortunately for Comte, in this election the Council of the Institution was associated with another body, the Academy of Sciences, which he had treated with habitual contempt and blamed Guizot for resuscitating, and in which he had made himself numerous enemies by arrogant and disparaging words[1]. Among the savans, the 'metaphysical party,' instinctively hating him as their destined destroyer, had long pursued the policy in the periodical literature which was mainly in their hands, of 'burking' his writings and keeping him in ignominious obscurity; and their leader, Guizot, after high appreciation of his survey of human knowledge in the early volumes of his great work, had shirked the suggested founding, in the Collège de France, of a chair of 'History of the Positive Sciences,' because Comte alone was qualified to fill it: and so, this powerful minister, being 'but an arrogant pedant and piece of ambitious vulgarity[2],' was naturally eager to suppress the man whom he had wronged. The 'theological party,' offended at his affirming, in his annual lectures on astronomy, that morals were independent of

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. xiii. seqq.; and Lettres de Comte à J. S. Mill, Avant-propos and Annexes.

[2] Lettres à Mill, p. 33.

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religious belief, had the same reason for withholding from him every public function as they had for procuring the condemnation at Rome, early in 1842, of the first part of his *Philosophie Positive*. 'The scientific party,' chiefly devoted to the inorganic field, were led by the mathematicians, who resented his exposure of them as specialists and his reduction of their claims; while the scanty band of rising biologists, though with De Blainville favourable to him, could as yet only feebly struggle against the dominance of the *physiciens*. Under this combination of influences, his very letter of candidature was suppressed by the Committee of the Academy, and the decisive recommendation was given to an inferior competitor, a member of their own body[1].

This irregular proceeding wrung from him indignant protests, which, however natural, were sure to exasperate his enemies more than they inspirited his friends, and so to increase the insecurity of his position. Complaint and defiance do not go well together; the pity awakened by the one is cancelled by resentment at the other; and in Comte's recitals of his wrongs there is an incongruous blending of whining and scorn which repels even willing sympathy. In telling the story of his disappointed candidature, he had treated powerful men,—as Guizot and Arago,—with acrimonious invective, and had spurned for incapacity the authoritative intellectual classes of his country; and it was hardly possible that the alienations thus occasioned should not at last be brought home to him in some palpable form. He had always regarded his annual re-election to his office in the Polytechnic as merely formal, and had been justified by all precedents in doing so; but, to his dismay, the vote of the Council in May, 1844, negatived his reappointment as Examiner by a majority of nine against five[2]. As, however,

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. xix–xxix.

[2] Robinet, ap. Lettres à Mill, Avant-propos ix. and Lettre XXV. p. 242. The decision was confirmed by the Council in December, on a vote of ten to nine. Ibid. p. 284.

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the duties were devolved upon no definite successor, but only on a *locum tenens*, a reasonable hope remained of his reinstatement at the next election; and to provide him with an interim compensation, Mr. Mill raised among a few of his friends, headed by Sir W. Molesworth and Mr. Grote, a fund sufficient for his modest wants[1]. When a second and a third year passed without his restoration, the provisional contributions flagged[2]; Mill became tired and Comte querulous, and their correspondence ceased[3]. In 1848, the suspense was ended by the final settlement of the Examinership in other hands, entailing the further loss of an engagement as mathematical tutor in a dependent school[4]. His nearest disciples came to the rescue; and under their distinguished chief, M. Littré, issued on November 12 a Circular appealing to his known European admirers, inviting them to join in securing him an annual subsidy of 5,000 francs[5]. The response was encouraging, and passed the required amount in 1852, when he was severed from the Polytechnic by losing his second office of *Répétiteur*[6]. The fund settled into an institution ('Subside Sacerdotal'),—a kind of Peter's Pence in support of the 'High Priest of Humanity,'—claimed and acknowledged by an annual letter from its recipient[7].

Mill, though declining the position of an English party-agent in the dissensions of the Paris savans, made no secret of his admiration for Comte's great work, and contributed much to its reputation in this country. On his recommendation Sir John Herschel read it, and was thus led to make its second volume, specially the Twenty-seventh Leçon on Sidereal Astronomy, a subject of criticism in his Presidential Address at the annual meeting (1845) of the 'British Association for the Advancement of Science.' Comte, aware

[1] Lettres à Mill, pp. 251. 265.
[2] Ibid. pp. 270. 274. 388 seqq.
[3] Ibid. pp. 393. 410. 425; and Avant-propos, x.
[4] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 22.
[5] Ibid. IV. Pref. App. xxii.
[6] Robinet ap. Lettres à Mill, Avant-propos ix.
[7] Pol. Pos. IV. Pref. App. xxv. seqq.

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that he was studying the book, had not expected a very favourable judgment upon it; for it absolutely repudiates all Sidereal Astronomy (to which especially the Herschels had been devoted), as beyond the range of human knowledge, and limits the science to the Solar System. Notwithstanding, therefore, the 'ingenious,' 'luminous,' and 'judicious' character of Herschel's genius, he suspects him not 'profound' enough to appreciate the Positive Philosophy[1]. It turned out, however, that the President's criticism did not address itself to the attack upon his favourite study, but dealt with an argument, occurring in the same Leçon, on behalf of Laplace's hypothesis as to the formation of the Solar System. Admitting that of such an hypothesis a 'numerical verification' is 'an indispensable criterion,' Comte had sought and, as he supposed, found one, by computing the consequences of Laplace's assumed elements, —of a rotating incandescent nebula, leaving behind, as it cools and shrinks, successive planetary rings,—and obtaining a series of numbers which agree with the actually observed relations of our planetary system[2]. It appears, however, when his primary assumptions are closely scrutinised, that they omit, as complicating the problem, all the conditions that are special to Laplace's hypothesis, except its required time of the nebular rotation (which by no means agrees with the sun's); and that they are cut down to 'Huyghens's theorems for finding the values of centrifugal forces in combination with the law of gravitation,' i.e. to the simple conditions from which Newton[3] demonstrates the third law of Kepler,—'that the squares of the periodic times of planets are as the cubes of their mean distances from the sun.' These numerical relations, therefore, would equally exist, 'whether the sun threw off the planets or not;' whilst, if it did, the time of his rotation could not be what it is; and the alleged verification suffers total collapse[4]. 'I really

[1] Lettres à Mill, p. 276.
[2] Phil. Pos. II. 376, seqq.
[3] Princ. Phil. I. iii. 15.
[4] British Association Reports, Cambridge meeting, 1845, xxxviii, xxxix, and note.

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should consider,' says Sir John Herschel, 'some apology needed for even mentioning an argument of the kind to such a meeting, were it not that this very reasoning, so ostentatiously put forward and so utterly baseless, has been eagerly received among us as the revelation of a profound analysis.' In this last allusion he has in view the author of the 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation [1],' together with J. S. Mill, and probably Sir D. Brewster's notice of Comte in the 'Edinburgh Review,' 1838. Mill immediately reported to Comte this serious criticism and the discussion upon it, in which Sedgwick joined as an ally of the President; and it is difficult to watch the correspondents' condolence with each other without a touch of amused sympathy. That they should make the least of the intellectual slip might well be conceded to the first impulse of self-excuse. But they vilify the motives of their critic, so largely honoured before. 'You have already,' says Comte, 'sufficiently proved, with an air of politeness, the malevolence and even bad faith of Herschel. He has too much judgment and knowledge to believe seriously and with good faith in the insinuations of ignorance which he dares to throw out.' 'He must inwardly feel the irresistible force of my main argument' against 'the pretended Sidereal Astronomy;' 'and, depend upon it, will always be on the look-out for pretexts for weakening my scientific authority. Such, I take it, is the essential motive of his conduct towards me.' Sedgwick is the object of a different suspicion. He is the unconscious tool of Arago's malice; and has been carefully got up for his part by being surreptitiously furnished with a manuscript *Mémoire* of Comte's, presented to the Academy in 1835 and preserved in its archives; no one but the virtual dictator of the Academy is in a position to commit such a breach of official confidence. For these reasons the Positive Philosopher thinks 'neither of these two gentlemen deserves the honour of any public reply;' and he will not,

[1] Now known to be the late Robert Chambers. See the recent edition, with its interesting Preface by Mr. Ireland.

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for such adversaries, break his rule of silence. At the same time he intimates his intention, should the *Philosophie Positive* reach a second edition, of cancelling the whole discussion of Laplace's cosmogony, as 'not sufficiently positive;' though he proposes not only to retain, but to strengthen, his attack upon Sidereal Astronomy[1]. Was there ever a more melancholy shuffle out of the simple duty of saying, 'I thank you for clearing me of an illusion?'

Comte, however, had to encounter this incident when he was not at his best. He had left behind him the 'two years of indispensable calm' which he felt needful after the dissolution of his marriage. He complains of a recurrence of nervous excitement[2] which reminds him of a former crisis, and warns him to keep worries at a distance. And he is in the first stage of a new birth which is to plant him amid the surprises of a fresh world of experiences. Hitherto, he was only half 'evolved;' as the Scotch say, 'he was not *all there*;' his organising intellect had taken advantage of its precocity and assumed the supreme place. True it is that during the 'profound negative phase' of 'revolutionary aberration' which preceded his systematic development, a certain 'veneration' and 'enthusiasm' 'preserved him from sophistical demoralisation, though leaving him peculiarly exposed for a time to the seductions of a shallow and depraved juggler[3].' But on the whole his affective nature had remained in the chrysalis state: he had cared little for his mother till she was gone; becoming aware of the serious 'lacunæ' in his character, he had taken a wife expressly to remedy his 'involuntary defect' of tenderness; but was mortified to find her, like the medicines of M. Esquirol, the 'greatest obstacle to his tardy coming to himself[4].' Now, however, when he was forty-seven years of age, a deliverer appeared who would enable him to make up for lost time. He became acquainted with Madame Clotilde de Vaux, a lady who was suffering through 'an equivalent fatality' to

[1] Lettres à Mill, 362–368. 373.
[2] Ibid. 340. 342. 356.
[3] Catéchisme positiviste, Pref. xxxii.
[4] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 8.

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his own loneliness, being separated from a husband sentenced to the galleys, and who, in her docility, was ready to exchange natures with him, and consolidate herself into a Positivist whilst she softened him into a romantic woman. In the fragments of her writings and conversation there is nothing to explain the mood of chivalric devotion to which she brought her new preceptor. A novelette ('Lucie') of hers which Comte has reprinted [1], and which is founded on the story of her own unhappy matrimonial lot, shows indeed that her respect for the marriage tie was proof against the most persuasive incentives to hold it annulled, and so evinces her sympathy with Comte's own approval of the strict Catholic doctrine of conjugal obligation; but, beyond this favourable moral indication, it has no literary interest to bear out the lofty praises of her intellectual gifts, or warrant her own hope of overbalancing the influence of George Sand. She wakened in him, however, and concentrated upon herself, the affections due to every relation of life: she was to him at once his betrothed, his daughter, his disciple, his redeemer, his divinity; the 'incomparable angel,' as he himself says, 'whom the *ensemble* of human destinies had commissioned, to make him their worthy organ for finally achieving the gradual perfection of our moral nature [2].' The change wrought, after mid-life, in this man of large, full, and daring mind, by an undistinguished young woman of thirty, is analogous, in its suddenness and depth, to what is known as the process of conversion; and its excesses, at once ludicrous and pathetic, are due to the incongruous heaping on a finite nature of affections that are meant and measured only for the Infinite. Certain it is that the 'two philosophical lives,' separated by 'the incomparable moral regeneration due to his holy passion [3],' are more conspicuous for contrast than for continuity; and though he regards the second as yielding his 'main construction,' and labours to establish its logical connection with the first, its superiority consists in a recognition of

[1] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. xxii. seqq. [2] Ibid. I. Pref. 8. [3] Ibid. 6.

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moral conceptions and appreciation of an order of sentiments plainly inadmissible on the principles of his earlier philosophy. It enthrones affections, it appeals to enthusiasms, it institutes practices, it predicts futurities, which are chimerical, unless the logic of his fundamental structure be unsound.

In what then consists that 'moral resurrection' which he owed to this wonderful Clotilde, with her 'complete superiority to all that is offered by the study of the past, the observation of the present, and even the conception of the future[1]?' In the discovery that *the heart is to have the primacy over the head*[2]; that the movement of humanity is from the affective life, while the intellectual function is simply regulative and selective. Hence, the *laws* of social progress, though working within a world under physical, chemical, and organic rules, must be sought in the constitution of the human affections; and the *art* of social progress must consist in making the best of that constitution, and must go for its power to the natures in which the emotional impulses are most intense and generous. It is among women and the proletary classes that this condition is best fulfilled[3]; and from them, accordingly, Comte henceforth chiefly learns, and to them he hopes first to teach, that crowning science of *Sociology*, which his 'regeneration' now enables him to create. In this are summed up the intellectual and moral results which 'all sympathetic hearts and synthetic minds' will recognise in his fresh inspiration, and which already draw forth the homage 'of both sexes to the new Beatrice:' this latest 'service of his will secure for her name an inseparable union with his own in the most distant memory of a grateful humanity:' for has she not enabled him to become a twofold organ of human progress,—'following up the career of an Aristotle by that of a St. Paul[4]?'

[1] Pol. Pos. Pref. 9.
[2] Catéchisme Pos. Pref. xvii.
[3] Ibid. Pref. 3, 4.
[4] Ibid. xxiii.

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It may well surprise us that Comte should be ambitious of resembling so very theological a saint as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Probably the analogy, as it opened upon him in his new birth, was not less surprising to himself than it is to us. But it is perfectly simple. Paul he invariably treats as the Founder of Christianity: Comte is the Founder of the Religion which steps into the place vacated by Christianity. Paul instituted a Universal Christendom, crossing the boundaries of race and language, and abating political separation by spiritual ties: Comte creates a Common Worship and international hierarchy for the 'Republic of the West,' in the presence of which the temporal power of each country shall be but a provincial executive. That this apostolic conception of himself was a new one, emerging from the influence of his 'angelic disciple,' is proved by its total absence from even the prophetic part of his first great work. There he is content to stand on the intellectual roll of honour as the consummator of philosophy; and in his forecast of renovated society, with its perfected education, morals, and art, there is no hint of any substituted equivalent for the eliminated theological ideas,—of any *cultus*, any priesthood, any temples, any *Grand-être* as the object of devotion. All these start into sudden existence, and are eagerly systematised, introducing all sorts of sacerdotal language and pontifical pretension. Indications of this singular turn of mind already appear in the author's first 'Philosophical Letter' to Clotilde, while she is still greeted on her Fête with the formal address 'Madame.' Here he praises the ancient practice of *Apotheosis*, whereby the benefactors of mankind were introduced at death into the assembly of the gods: it was at once a legitimate expression of veneration and an impressive patronage of virtue: only, it had this drawback: in a polytheistic system all 'the Divine departments were so well filled up already, that these *new gods without portfolios* could seldom obtain much importance.' 'The simple *beatification* under the Christian monotheism perfected this essential part of every

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social organisation[1].' Yet the Divine realm to which the saint is raised is preoccupied by an infinite excellence which eclipses and absorbs him, and to which he can add nothing distinctive; and the images of the persons canonised will never be clear and their impression durable, till they pass into a heaven empty of all but human forms and capable of being enriched by fresh types of moral beauty. While the sun dominates the sky, you cannot see the stars; and so, Comte seems to think, till God is blotted out from the dome of thought, no eye can be raised with discriminative reverence to the lights of various magnitude that form the constellations of past genius and goodness. He therefore fills the blank of a vacated infinity by crowding it with the ghosts of personal or historic memory, and sets up the borrowed moonlight of 'hero-worship' as the sole Divine luminary of life; and, after long denouncing the 'anthropomorphism' of other religions, ends with systematic adoration of actual men and women. For such in truth it is, however veiled its character may be by running back to the 'metaphysic stage' for an abstract entity and calling it the worship of 'Humanity;' and such it is confessed to be by M. Littré when he calls it 'Le culte des hommes[2],' and by Comte himself when he says, 'Henceforth the knee of man will bend to woman only,' who will no longer have to fear the 'terrible rivalry of a vindictive God[3].'

It is a touching fact, however, which may almost silence criticism, that the institutes of this new worship were the creation of a deep and swift-coming sorrow. The 'angel visit' of Clotilde was over in a year: while he was in the midst of the regenerate social philosophy inspired by her influence, a painful illness snatched her away, on April 5, 1846[4]. The more this event filled him with resentment

[1] Pol. Pos. Pref. xxxiv. Conf. Lettres à Mill XXXV. XXXVII. with the *Sainte Clotilde* of which the recipient of this 'Philosophical Letter' is identical.
[2] De la Phil. Pos. II. Application, 157.
[3] Discours sur l'Ensemble du Positivisme, p. 253.
[4] Lettres à Mill, p. 413.

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against the blundering universe[1], the more did it intensify the love so cruelly bruised, and rend away every limit till the affection became infinite and passed into absolute worship. He erects an altar to her in his room, at which, three times a day, he realises her image and breathes forth his prayers. He makes a pilgrimage to her tomb each week; he dedicates to her a commemorative anniversary. And so little exclusive is her spirit that in all this her image appears to him not alone, but associated with those of his venerated mother and his exemplary cook, Sophie Bliot; who, with her affectionate fidelity and 'her happy inability to read,' afforded just the sample he required of the serving-woman's worth: so that from his devotions to the 'virtuous *ensemble* of these three admirable feminine types,' his character acquired complete conformity to the conditions of the social state, viz. veneration for superiors, attachment to equals, and kindness to inferiors[2]. Thus did the inspiration of his 'pure and immortal companion' give birth to moral results beyond all hope, and she who had been to him as his 'objective daughter' became by death his 'subjective mother[3],' and through him the prototype of perfected society.

From this private ritual appears to have sprung the whole of the 'Positivist religion.' Early in 1847 Comte delivered weekly a public course of unwritten lectures, each of three or four hours' duration, the introductory portion of which was soon worked up into literary form, and published in the summer of 1848, under the title *Discours sur l'Ensemble du Positivisme.* It constitutes in itself a compendious whole; but it stands also as the 'Preliminary Discourse' to the first volume (1851) of his *Politique Positive.* In this work the rudimentary ideas and ceremonial of his own new life reappear with a vast expansion. The commemoration of the beloved private dead is enlarged into the 'systematic worship of humanity,' into the ideal of which they have but shed the

[1] Pol. Pos. Dédicace, xv, xvi. [2] Ibid. Pref. 12, 13.
[3] Catéchisme Pos. Pref. xxiv, xxv.

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dew-drops of their pure lives; and the conception is wrought out into Levitical detail, of a composite 'Supreme Being,' 'composed of his own adorers' and ever growing as the historic ages pass. An organised priesthood, a breviary of services and fêtes, a calendar of the thirteen months in the readjusted year, each bearing the name of some towering personality in the past, a list of retrograde wrong-doers reserved for public cursing on an appointed day of malediction, are all provided for and indicated with the exactness of an *Ephemeris*[1]. Sentiment and imagination, once promoted to the supreme place and secure of deference from the intellect, are not soon stopped in the fascinating process of inventing a religion and aspiring to the prize which the 'Catholic unity' has lost; and so further steps are taken. In the next year, the faithful are surrounded by a group of 'guardian angels,' and instructed in the observance of the 'nine sacraments;' at three of which Comte himself, in 1850, officiated in his capacity of 'Priest of Humanity[2].' At the close of that year he was deeply engaged with 'The General Theory of Religion,' which opens the second volume of his *Politique Positive;* and his thoughts were carried by it so far beyond the limits of any 'general' treatment that, to preserve them while they were fresh and present them while they were clear, he suspended his main work and produced, by way of *Excursus*, the *Catéchisme Positiviste*, intended as a complete and permanent Manual of the new faith and cultus[3]. Several additions and modifications are introduced to perfect the scheme; but the change which strikes the reader most is in the more embittered antithesis between the 'servants of humanity' and the 'slaves of God[4],' in the more intense aversion to revolutionary restlessness and anarchy, and obvious leaning towards absolute government, and the more confident spirit of European propagandism.

The growing ascendency in Comte of mystical sentiment

[1] Discours, 326–346. [2] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 18, 19.
[3] Ibid. II. Pref. ix.; Catéchisme Pref. xv, xvi. [4] Cat. Pref. i.

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and hieratic pretension changed more or less the character of his following. It attracted some sensitive and enthusiastic natures that were beyond the reach of his intellectual organisation of the sciences; and actually began to produce a literature of devotion: one of the young converts, M. Lonchampt, having issued 'a valuable set of touching prayers' for home use[1]. On the other hand, it repelled the severe thinkers who had been won by his commanding survey of the whole field of knowledge, and brilliant attempt to reduce history to law. They did not want a reproduction of the Catholic directorate, though they themselves were to be its priests; nor did they like the total alienation of Comte from the active self-assertion of the Revolution; his approval of the Parisian *coup d'état* and usurped dictatorship of 18 1[2]; his praise of Louis Napoleon's energy, prudence, and perseverance[3], as guarantees of external peace and promising internal regeneration[4]; his ridiculous advances by letter, with proffered presentation of his *Catéchisme* and published volumes of his *Politique Positive*, to the Emperor Nicholas I, as the only European ruler who understood his time and rightly balanced order and progress, and to the Vizier Redshid Pasha at Constantinople[5]. Of those who seceded under the influence of these motives, and 'manifested their moral insufficiency' by dropping their subscriptions to his subsidy, a few relented and returned. But the general effect of Comte's 'regenerate' period of production was to turn Positivism from a scientific organism into a sectarian institute, committing its adherents not only to a common logic of research and synopsis of natural laws, but to a polity, a ritual, and scheme of personal life, little less peculiar in conception than those of the religious orders. Nor can we say that they are less exclusive. The problem which they aim at solving is thus defined: 'how to reorganise society without God or king, under simply the normal preponderance,

[1] Pol. Pos. I. Pref. 19.
[2] Ibid. III. Pref. xii.
[3] Catéchisme, Pref. ix.
[4] Pol. Pos. IV. Pref. xix.
[5] Ibid. III. Pref. xiii, xiv; Catéchisme, Pref. vii, viii.

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private and public, of social feeling, suitably supported by positive reason and real activity[1];' so that we ought to receive without surprise the august proclamation which meets our eye on opening the Catechism, 'In the name of the Past and of the Future, the Servants of Humanity, speculative and practical, mean to assume as their right the general direction of the world's affairs, to erect at length the true Providence, moral, intellectual, and material; excluding, once for all, the slaves of God of every class,—Catholic, Protestant, Deist,—as disturbers out of date[2].' So much in earnest is he with this anathema that it comes out again before this preface closes: the positive regime, he tells us, will put all retrograde folks out of the way, 'by treating any one who lingers in the theological or metaphysical state as disqualified for government by weakness of brain[3].' Even in France, and among the competent appreciators of his first great work, there are not a few whom this pontifical arrogance is sure to offend; and from the time of its assumption it abated the attraction towards him of the higher and nobler order of minds.

The 'Polytechnic spoliation' being complete in 1852, the third and fourth volumes of the *Politique Positive* were rapidly produced, and appeared in the two succeeding years. With them his life-work virtually closed. Whether or not he had really created a new science, and secured Sociology as the apex to the pyramid of knowledge, he had at least developed and exhausted his conception of it, and had left no room for another tier of true thought. He had indeed contemplated, and briefly sketched at the close of his *Philosophie Positive* a further series of works, the promise of which his second treatise did not completely fulfil. Of that scheme there still remained unexecuted (1) a synthetic exposition of mathematical philosophy, which his successors should follow up by similar development of philosophical method in astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology; (2) in the sphere of applied sociology, a volume on positive education;

[1] Discours, p. 123. [2] Pref. init. [3] Ibid. xxxix.

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and (3) a systematic treatise on the action of man upon nature[1]. In 1854, he still indulged the hope of carrying out this design[2]. But it advanced no further than the first volume, published in 1856 under the general title *Synthèse Subjective*. His rate of production had become less rapid; and it is probable that the recasting of familiar thoughts into a new order (and such was essentially the task which he had set himself) was not very stimulating to him, as his later life steeped him more and more in meditative feeling. His intellectual enthusiasm paled before the deepening glow of his benevolence, in perfect accordance with the rule of his philosophy; and his habits resembled those of an ascetic devotee rather than those of a reorganiser of human knowledge. Every day he rose at five, and never neglected his own ritual of 'prayer,' or his chapter of the *Imitatio Christi*, or his passage of Dante; and every Wednesday afternoon he might be seen at the grave of Clotilde de Vaux. His meals were scrupulously frugal and scanty; and his dinner regularly closed with the slow eating of a piece of dry bread, with thoughts compassionately turned towards the multitude of poor by whom even such a morsel was hardly earned. In this temper of undoubted and deepening humanity he approached the end of his career, and died on September 5, 1857.

§ 2. *Outline of his System of Thought.*

In sketching the outline of Comte's system of thought, I cannot avoid saying more than seems needful for my immediate object (viz. to estimate its bearing on ethical theory), yet less than will give an adequate impression of his largeness and keenness of intellectual view. As he himself insists that his doctrine of Morals and Society is the last of several links whence it must not be detached, it cannot be rightly judged but as their dependent term; and they must be exhibited as its antecedents. But when he has conducted us, step by step, to its principle, in the

[1] Phil. Pos. VI. Pref. 887–894. [2] Pol. Pos. Pref. 5, 6.

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estimate of which our work is done, he launches out, for inductive illustration, into a vast historical survey of European life and morals throughout the Pagan and Christian civilisation. This appears to me by far his most brilliant achievement, and, though variously open to special criticism, leaves a magnificent impression of his sympathetic insight and his breadth of combination. Even if it proved, however, the particular law of development which it is adduced to establish, a generalisation of history is not a philosophy of morals, and might be true or untrue without affecting the fundamental doctrine of obligation. I must, therefore, leave this sequel to our main problem of method with the remark, that nowhere have I found the molecular infinitude of human movements through past centuries gathered into more luminous masses and traced along clearer paths; nowhere, especially, have I met with a juster appreciation of the play of social elements in medieval Christendom, than in the fifth and sixth volumes of the *Philosophie Positive*.

The structural framework of principles pertaining to our object may be laid out as follows:—

A. LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE.—The Limits of Knowledge are assumed by Comte to extend no further than the observable finite contents of Space and Time. So far as objects and events in that field awaken in us perceptions of Sense, they constitute the materials of cognition: we notice their similarities and differences: we learn their order of occurrence; and there our dealings with them stop. We are naturally impelled, it is true, to press upon them with further questions, which look behind and within them as things perceived: especially with regard to each *kind of things*, 'what is the one persistent *type* that reappears in every member?' and with regard to each *kind of change*, what is the *cause* to which it is due? Nor is it denied that this natural impulse is the original spring of all our curiosity; that, but for it, no light of intelligence would ever have been sought or found. Nevertheless, it is purely illusory, and

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sets us on a quest that can never be satisfied: it asks for reality other than appearance; for change, something more than its position in time; and neither of these is to be had for any asking. The true Positivist is taught, at his very initiation, 'the necessary inanity of the search for causes,' and warned against the mystic's illusion in pursuing them[1]. 'Every proposition which is not reducible, in the last resort, to the simple statement of a fact, particular or general, must be without real and intelligible sense[2].' In conformity with this rule, and in order 'to get rid of the vain pretension to investigate the *causes* of phenomena,' Comte would cancel all dynamic language and forbid the use of the word *force*: 'Forces are only *movements* produced or tending to be produced;' 'but though happily this is pretty well understood now-a-days, yet an essential reform is still needed, if not in the conception, at least in the habitual language, in order to cancel altogether the old metaphysical notion of *force*, and present more accurately than hitherto the true point of view[3].' We must even be upon our guard against mystifying the only thing which we can apprehend about phenomena, viz. their *laws*: the word denotes simply 'their invariable relations of succession and resemblance[4].' And, finally, under *phenomena* we must not include more than *external facts*, that may be objects of perception; for it is a pure illusion that we can know the changes of our internal history, e.g. our intellectual processes, or our spontaneous emotions. When indeed we have impulses that tend to rush into action and stir our limbs, we may have self-knowledge of what takes place, because the organ moved is an external object to the organ that impels; but where they coincide, and that which feels is no other than that which has also to know, the double feat is pronounced by Comte to be impossible: 'by an invincible necessity the human mind can directly observe all phenomena except its own[5].'

The impossible knowledge, against the semblance of

[1] Catéchisme, pp. 43. 56; Discours, 391. [2] Phil. Pos. VI. 703.
[3] Phil. Pos. I. 544; III. 652. [4] Ibid. I. 5. [5] Ibid. I. 35.

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which we are thus cautioned, Comte habitually designates as *absolute*, doubtless under the idea that it pretends to understand something *per se*, apart from any history of it in time; and possible knowledge he opposes to it as *relative*, because resolvable into a perceived *order* of grouping or of consecution among changes observed. His ban against the former he condenses into the dictum, 'there is only one absolute principle, that there is nothing absolute.' It is singular that instead of adhering to the proper correlate of this excommunicated adjective, viz. the word *relative*, he substitutes what is not far from *absolute* over again, viz. the epithet *Positive*, and selects it as the baptismal name of his own philosophy. The word, it is plain, does not define, but only affirms: it does not single out, from the contents of the general conception 'philosophy,' the mark which saves the species from being confounded with the 'absolute' kinds; it simply asserts that, when you have got the undefined thing, you will have secured the genuine treasure, and hit upon *a reality* and no sham. In Comte's own defence of the term, this dogmatic feature in its signification comes out with great *naïveté:* 'all the Western languages use it,' he says, 'to indicate the two attributes of *reality and utility*, the combination of which must henceforth be all that is needful to define the true genius of philosophy[1].' It is a pity, however, to overlook the difference between a title and a puff.

B. Contents and Order of Knowledge.—After dismissing whatever is beyond human cognisance, the Positivist addresses himself to the survey of what lies within its range. The Contents and Arrangement of Knowledge were early studied by Comte, with a resulting classification of sciences, which by its precision and luminousness has excited high admiration far beyond the limits of his School. His assumption, that perceptible phenomena constitute the sole objects of knowledge, enabled and compelled him to be content with a single *fundamentum divisionis*, and to raise

[1] Discours, 56.

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his whole structure upon the same base; in contrast with those who recognise some other source of truth (as self-introspection) than sensible perception, and with whom therefore the edifice must take the form rather of two parallel columns than of an all-including pyramid. He disposes the sciences in the order of their increasing complexity, beginning with the simplest, viz. the Mathematics, and ending with Sociology, which has to reckon with the whole nature of the most fully organised being. Or, to vary the mode of reaching the same arrangement, we may say, each science takes charge of some specified attribute or attributes of things, to investigate and interpret. Some of these are universal, and cannot be absent anywhere, nay, do not even want material things to house them at all; as extension and number need only the varieties of space and successions of time for the existence of their relations. Nothing, therefore, asks so little for its conditions as geometry and arithmetic; and nothing is so wide in application; for everything has measure.

If there were but one kind of matter in the world,—e.g. hydrogen, or carbon, or silver,—not without motion, there would everywhere be definite forms and magnitudes and velocities subject to quantitative comparison, and realising geometrical relations. The first science, therefore, would be at work upon the field. But when it had done all, there would remain still a group of phenomena of which it could render no account, e.g. changes in the aggregation of parts, in the direction and rapidity of their motion, in the density and cohesion of masses; and to find the rules to which these conformed would require protracted and recorded observations, reduced at last to generalised expression. The results, when obtained, would constitute a second science, holding good for every system built of the materials known to us. That science is *Physics*, comprising the laws of all phenomena depending on the universal properties of matter. It presupposes, it needs, it uses the mathematics; but is constituted by superadded investigations of its own.

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I have allowed myself here to deviate a little from Comte's exposition, in order to be more strictly true to his idea. He interposes *Astronomy* between the mathematics and physics. But between celestial physics and terrestrial the only difference is this: that the heavenly bodies, being inaccessible except to sight, disclose to us only a part of the phenomena inseparable from all matter: to learn the rest, we have to seek bodies which we can manipulate in experiment and compel to answer our testing questions. It was natural that the stars should stand as the most eminent representatives of what happened to mere material masses, as such, so long as they exhibited to us only motion and mechanism in exceptional isolation. But Newton has thrown the earth in among them, and made one science run through all; nor is there more reason for distinguishing the physics than the optics of the heavens from those of our planet. Moreover, if astronomy is to include all Sidereal studies, it already slips, in one direction, over the boundary of physics which, on the other, it does not reach; inasmuch as the spectrum analysis detects the heterogeneous composition of stars, and so carries us into the ulterior field of *Chemistry*.

For, this third science enters whenever matter ceases to be homogeneous and presents elements each with its own distinctive properties. From the interplay of these differences a new army of phenomena starts into birth, and requires fresh modes of experience to regiment and interpret its contents by rule. To notice and register what happens, as the several kinds, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, carbon, &c. combine or separate, and to measure the quantitative stages of such combinations, is the business of the chemist; a function which, being exercised on material already amenable to the processes of the physical and mathematical observatory, is evidently added on to these as an upper story to a lower.

When once the chemical laws respecting familiar bodies have been ascertained, we can usually decompose and re-

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compose them with nearly equal ease. But we encounter a large class of cases in which the former process is possible to us, but cannot be reversed: we can analyse a grain of wheat, or a herring's spawn, and record the proportions; but we cannot make it; the receipt for it is knowledge only and not art. Yet the feat is spontaneously accomplished throughout the *organic* realm of the world; which thus presents a special order of phenomena, transcending the resources of the chemical laboratory, though wrought out under the conditions of its rules. These phenomena are summed up under the name *Life:* they have to be investigated separately, as if on their own account, but by persons who know what has gone before; and the resulting body of generalised facts, i.e. laws, constitutes the fourth science,—viz. *Biology*. It is the first to emerge beyond the inorganic field.

Among the living beings embraced within the researches of biology Man stands at the summit, as the highest example of organisation. The question naturally arises whether, in this eminent position, he displays simply the animal attributes in the supreme degree, so as to be wholly amenable to the physiologist's methods; or so clearly overpasses them as to demand new modes for determining the laws of his nature. Comte's answer may be anticipated from his total rejection, already mentioned, of psychological self-knowledge; for, in the absence of this resource, we are thrown entirely upon external observation, which is of just as much avail for man as for other animals. With the Positivist, accordingly, anthropology, in its usual significance, is a purely zoological study: the intellectual and affective and volitional human phenomena are to be investigated, like the instincts of other tribes, simply as functions of certain cerebral organs; the only difference being that those organs are, in this case, more numerous and perfect than in any other. When you have said that in man the recognised modes of measurement show the brain to be relatively heavier than in his dumb kindred, and that

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its anterior and superior regions are in larger proportion to the whole, you have summed up the scientific account of his characteristics as an individual being.

But it was impossible to take leave of him with this niggardly compliment. Comte did not think so lightly of language, literature, and law; of the formation and struggles of nations; of the sciences which he cultivated and the arts and industries which they created; or even of the temples and the faiths that were no longer his; as to feel no wonder at these unique phenomena, or to find all their conditions complete in an additional ounce or so of brain. He noticed two things more to be prerequisites to them,—*Society* and *Historic Time;* without the former, individual personality cannot arise and assert itself; without the latter, its type cannot grow from generation to generation, or flow by sympathy into collective and continuous masses of power. Humanity, thus regarded, exhibited an evolution altogether peculiar, and beyond the researches of the biologist; for it was a phenomenon of centuries and millenniums; and though it might be attended by slow and small organic changes, he cannot recover the brain of an Alexander or a Charlemagne to compare with that of a Napoleon or a Bismarck. As the growth of an animal can be traced not only in modified organs but in maturing instincts, even within the interval between the embryo and the corpse, so may the development of social life through a score of ages reveal its order, though its countless members are gone, by the attested or surviving vestiges of activity. Historical comparison, showing what they were and what they are, and marking off the path and rate from start to goal, and tested by the parallel story of distinct communities, will bring to light the laws, if such there be, which define the evolution of humanity. To establish and interpret these laws is the aim, and, it is affirmed, the achievement of the new and fifth science of *Sociology*.

To this hierarchy of sciences certain general features are referred on which Comte lays great stress. Each of the

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earlier is simpler than its successor, as dealing with a more elementary nature, i.e. with fewer properties. It is, therefore, in logical phrase, of less comprehension, but of wider extension. In virtue of this simplicity, the prior terms have been the first to appear in the order of human culture, and, both in individual education and in the intellectual progress of the world, have made themselves good as the base of that which follows. Further, the laws which the several sciences register are of two kinds, unequally present in different parts of the series; one class defining the conditions of some permanent existence; the other, defining the conditions of some change: the former are *Statical;* the latter *Dynamical;* and as the object must exist ere it can move, the first care must be to secure the statical element. There is no science on the list that has not both. Even Geometry, though investigating necessary and eternal properties of figure, becomes dynamical as soon as it resorts to *genetic* definition, involving the conceived motion of points and lines to create or modify relations. In Physics, the positions and kinds of bodies in Space, if all stood still; in Chemistry, the enumeration of elements and their combinations at any given moment; in Biology, the anatomical disposition of organs; in Sociology, the statement of components that must coexist to make a family and a State; form the Statical groundwork of the theory; while Newton's law and Dalton's (with its later supplements), Physiology, and the inductive determination of historical laws, belong to its Dynamical superstructure.

Up to the verge of his final science, Comte's theory of procedure has maintained a uniform direction through its preceding terms; but on reaching and entering it, performs a sudden *volte-face* which needs explanation. The total body of knowledge in each science consists, we have seen, of two parts, viz. the laws already won and delivered into it, as presuppositions, by its simpler predecessors; and its own inductions from its more complicated field. So long as the added properties for which these inductions are needed

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can be isolated and their phenomena exposed for separate study, the new laws may be distinctly worked out and joined on as a sequel to what was known before; and the ascending order will encounter no embarrassment. But the more complex the functions become, the less possible is such detached measurement of them: in all organised beings the conditions of life, and above all in human society the conditions of order, are made up of a tissue of reciprocal relations with which it is difficult or impossible to reckon one by one. The equilibrium depends on a consensus of parts so numerous that the conception of it cannot be built up piecemeal by superposition of its elements; rather is it gained, when the balance itself is lost through the overgrowth now of one of its tributaries, and now of another. At this end of the scale, therefore, the phenomena of the whole nature before us are better known than those of its component functions, and the latter can emerge into view only through changes in the former. Though man, objectively regarded, i.e. as belonging to the furniture of the world, is only a quadrumanous mammal plus a certain appendix of functions, you cannot, by taking up and defining one of these functions after another and throwing it into your idea of an ape, get to know what human society and history are: on the contrary, these are far better known to you already from your participation in them by experience and sympathy. Their laws, therefore, are to be learned from the variations of their own phenomena, as resulting from humanity as a whole; and this must here be the *primary* study; while the gains of the previous sciences will hold the *secondary* place, as giving account only of the scene and environment of man, seldom coming into the sociological reckoning, except as *modifying* the application of general laws. This inversion of method from the ascending to the descending order, in the case of the final science, is sometimes described by Comte as a change from the *objective* to the *subjective* mode of treatment; i.e. in the one case you approach man from the universe: in the

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other, the universe from man. Hence, his philosophy faces both ways; and, from imperfect attention to this fact, those of his disciples who look chiefly at one face contradict at times those who are attracted by the other. Thus M. Littré's characterisation of 'the Positive Philosophy,' as a whole, is that it proceeds 'from the world to man,' instead of 'from man to the world,' like 'the metaphysical,' and so obtains a commanding position, like astronomy when shifted from a geocentric to a heliocentric position: its supreme merit is that it subordinates 'subjective ideas to objective ideas.' 'It advances from the world to man, and not from man to the world[1].' Dr. Bridges, on the other hand, says of Comte's 'Synthesis of Scientific Conceptions,' 'that synthesis was *subjective*, and not *objective*. It discarded, that is to say, all attempts to stand outside the universe, and to explain it. The unifying influence, that which made it a synthesis, was the recognition of man as the central object; of the study of social and moral phenomena as the central science, to which the rest were subsidiary.' It is elaborately contrasted, from this point of view, with the scientific system of Descartes, whose 'Synthesis failed, *because it was objective*[2].'

[1] De la Phil. Pos. pp. 64. 66. 102.

[2] Evolution and Positivism. Fortnightly Review, June, 1877, pp. 853. 870; conf. July 1877, p. 113.

The antithesis *Subjective—Objective* seems to have been a snare to the Positivists. Comte himself deems it indispensable, but uses it inaccurately. And the sense apparently attached to the word *objective* by Dr. Bridges,—to judge from its application,—I do not remember to have met with before. As a designation of Method, it appears, in the very able papers cited in the text, to denote *Deduction of a Cosmogony from a few inadequate assumptions*, as distinguished from *Induction of such laws of phenomena as are of interest to man*. Out of these complex conceptions several antitheses might be extracted; and it is difficult to conjecture which is meant; but so far as I can see, not one of them answers to the terms said to be the equivalent. *Induction* is quite as *objective* as *deduction;* more so indeed, as the latter is a purely logical explication of conceptions. The phenomena of his environment *which interest man* are no less *objective* to him than what is inferred to happen *in regions beyond his observation:* in neither case is he the *subject* of them. If the principles from which a deduction starts are legitimate and adequate, a Cosmos fetched out of them by sound reasoning is no

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C. DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.—The Development of human Knowledge is controlled, according to Comte, by his triple law, valid alike for each individual mind and for the historical life of humanity. The human interpretation of the world's phenomena necessarily passes through three stages, the theological, the metaphysical, the positive: the two earlier dominated by the illusory idea of *Causation;* the third, delivered from this, and content to read aright the time and space arrangements of objects and events, and test its rules by successful prevision. In the first stage, everything which awakens interest is referred to the will of external agents living and moving in the changes and outfit of the world: nature, especially in its grateful or terrible aspects, is animated by beings of personal impulses like the human; and in their favour or displeasure its changes find their adequate explanation. The scale on which they act through the elements and seasons makes them superhuman, and constitutes them gods. Personal action, however, though it is the sole possible type of causation, is apparently an affair of arbitrary and uncertain will; and can seem to give account of the behaviour of external things, only so long and so far as they affect men with the surprise of caprice: every observed uniformity, every calculable recurrence, escapes the embrace of this primitive theory, and leaves to it only the ever narrowing field of the startling and unforeseen.

The realm thus deserted by supernatural volition needs something, it is felt, to fill the void. It is supplied without violent departure from the same human analogy. Man does not always move on impulse, or accomplish everything by

more *objective* than a solar system or a smaller domain limited by the interests of man. If the principles are inadequate, it is either because generalised from too partial observations, or because arbitrarily assumed as *à priori* certainties. In the former case, the margin of swollen premiss beyond the facts of the world is a *logical excess*, seated in the reasoner's thought; in the latter, the failure is in the substitution of a metaphysical chimera for a rule of reality: in both, a gratuitous intrusion of subjective activity.

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his own hand. His life is largely made up of habits; and many a purpose is worked out by deputy and with tools. The fire that melts his metal or cooks his food, the wheel that eases his labour, the dam that diverts his stream, carry out his aims wholly or in part at second hand, and introduce the idea of mechanical force inherent, but not alive; and is it not the same when the sun with his glow cooks the supplies for human hunger, by mellowing the earth and sprouting the grain? Of the second causes thus introduced into thought, each one takes charge of a class of homogeneous phenomena, and is in fact nothing but the abstract notion of their generic character. As nature falls more and more into unvaried order before the observer, these abstractions multiply and spread over nearly the whole domain: lodged in the matter of the world, as gravitation, or centrifugal force, or elective affinity, or vitality, they are supposed to conduct its affairs without knowing it, though it may be only on commission from originating Will. This setting up of abstractions as essences, causes, or entities, constitutes the *metaphysical* stage of mental development.

Here, however, it is impossible for the mind to rest. It soon becomes apparent that the mechanised order of the second causes is what man is most concerned to know; and that, precisely because it *is* mechanised and rescued from caprice, he is able to foresee its coming steps and conform his action to them. His attention, therefore, fixes more and more upon the unconscious and necessary type of causation, which, even if cut off from its voluntary source and left there alone, would give him all the prevision and control of nature which he now exercises. Hence he becomes indifferent to the primary will, and concentrated upon the delegated laws of method. Nor will it signify to him whether the order of phenomena which he has to accept or hopes to modify range under this general name or under that,—be it gravitation, or heat, or magnetism;—it is the facts that he wants, and the rules of their occurrence;

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and while he has these, it makes little difference whether the heads under which they are ranged and conceived are too many or too few; were they all to lapse into unity, it would but relieve his memory of a few superfluous equations, now summed up in one. In other words, the metaphysical second causes follow the theological primary and vanish: the idea of causation is discharged, leaving for human interest and study simply the laws of coexistence and succession among phenomena. Thus is reached the final or *Positive* stage.

'The education of the individual, so far as it is spontaneous, necessarily presents the same phases as that of the species, and *vice versâ*. Now in our own days every man on the level of the age will easily verify the position in his own case, that in childhood he was naturally a theologian, in youth a metaphysician, in manhood a physicist. The history of the sciences directly proves that it has been the same with the *ensemble* of the human race[1].' So strictly does Comte accept and apply this rule, that he names the age at which the youth will begin to complete his evolution: at fourteen he will stand at the upper limit of his theological term, having already run through two prior segments of its length; and at twenty-one he will have left his metaphysics behind, and stand forth the essential Positivist. Such at least will be his history, so far as his education conforms itself to the spontaneous growth of his powers and tendencies of his nature[2].

By no society, however, and hardly by any individual, is the whole body of mental culture lifted from stage to stage at the same time. As a general rule, the sciences accomplish the passage through them in the order of their simplicity: the inorganic long before the organic, and the mathematical and physical first of all. This is only to repeat in other words the relative dates of discovery for the several classes of natural laws. Hence it follows that, till the process is consummated, all three states will be co-

[1] Pol. Pos. IV. App. Gen. pp. 137, 138. [2] Discours, 167–172.

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present in different members of the same community, and even in different departments of the same mind; so that even in the keen defining light of Paris, some shreds of metaphysic network still hang about biology, and for the student of morals a certain Divine nimbus lingers around the head of humanity, and hides its naked zoological affinities. The mixed phenomena due to this unequal advance inevitably complicate the inductive evidence of the general law, and give value to the additional support it may receive from theoretic considerations.

Of the three stages in this history of evolution, the third is of course regarded as final and therefore permanent. The second has no stability, and is merely transitional, the helpless struggle of thought in accelerated motion to check its own velocity and escape its inevitable fate. The first, on the other hand, is very protracted, and divides itself into three distinct stadia, each of which may persist through the whole life of a single race of men. In the first of these,—to which Comte somewhat arbitrarily appropriates the word *fetichism*,—the instinctive disposition to *animate* all things that affect the mind has as yet received no check, and individual objects of interest, however accidental, are regarded as living beings, helpful or dangerous by their propitious or hostile mood, and in their turn susceptible of influence by promises and threats. The concrete things which are thus præternaturalised, being casually thrown across each one's path of life, are not the same for any two men: like amulets or charms, they belong to the wearer; and except under agreement of partnership, the rule will be, *Quot homines, totidem Dii*; just as, among children of a family who personify their dolls, each sister will glorify her own, unless two special companions are drawn to patronise the same.

As there is nothing which may not become a fetich, the lot will sometimes fall upon an object that cannot permanently stand isolated in thought. Let it be a stream flowing by the hut of the savage, and requiring propitiation

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against destructive flood. In his upland wanderings, he discovers that, in that familiar current, it is not one frolicsome or passionate being alone that leaps from the rocks and tears through the meadow-land, but two or three, each of which is apt to break bounds in hurling the head waters down. Which to conciliate he can never tell: the effect he would deprecate is one from all, and so must be the will that brings it: it is a power identical with no single tributary, but dwelling in the whole system and wielding it: not any torrent here, or torrent there, but a river-god that commands the waters and bids them do this or that. Or, let the fetich be a tree. If it stands in a wood, it is surrounded by similars, hardly distinguishable from it; and they too must share its terrors and its honours. But countless repetitions of the same attitude of mind all through the contents of the wood amount, by their fusion and coalescence, to one undivided feeling towards what is common to the group. It is, therefore, this generic conception, and no longer any single concrete mass, that is personified; and the worship of a forest-god has been begun. Thus deduced by Comte, Polytheism advances out of Fetichism *pari passu* with generalisation: each constituted type of objects and phenomena taking up and absorbing into itself the supernatural character, which quits individual things and leaves them dead material.

No such ingenious hypothesis is suggested to explain the passage into Monotheism. The process is regarded as essentially a continuance of the change which had set in during the previous term. As the first generalisations were broken up with the progress of observation and lost in wider, the number of supernatural beings was reduced, and the visible and sensible world was more and more brought to the condition of homogeneous material, employed as *means* under definite commission to produce and sustain a Cosmos. Thus an approach was perpetually made to the idea of the Unity of Nature, and of the invariable mechanism of Law; and the council of the gods was replaced by a

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monarchy[1]. The whole of this vast curriculum is epitomised in every human being before he is out of his teens; and each of its modes of conception and belief the educator is to recognise and sanction in its season; encouraging the child in fetich-worship till seven; in polytheism till fourteen; and then initiating the youth into monotheism till he is qualified, at the end of his second decade, to learn how false it is[2].

The evidence of his great law of intellectual evolution, Comte admits, it is not possible to obtain complete from the history of any one society or continuous course of growing civilisation. Where the latest stadia have been reached, and can be traced, the earliest are lost to view in the darkness of the past; and where the earliest are present, they tell no tales of what is to follow. It is only by piecing together the two ends, and prefixing what is observed of contemporary savages to what is recorded of the most advanced historic people, and assuming that the separate fragments will unite into one chain, that the induction can be made out. If this be a weakness, any doubt arising from it affects only the initial stage, viz. of fetichism. In order to secure an unbroken continuity thenceforward, Comte, limiting himself to the European nations, takes Greece and Rome as exemplifying the Polytheistic culture, the Medieval Catholicism as representing the Monotheistic, treating the latter as evolved from the former; and then finds, in the decline of the Church power and the eventual spread of Protestantism, the true type of his Metaphysical stage, corrosive of everything and constructing nothing, but preparing a cleared field for the final invasion of Positivism, inaugurated by the French Revolution. That startling crisis was indeed but the loud bursting of the storm, the first unheeded clouds of which were already stealing up from the horizon of the fourteenth century. The ecclesiastical system had betrayed the need and the hopelessness of its regeneration, by the meritorious but ineffectual rise

[1] Pol. Pos. IV. App. Gen. p. 139.

[2] Discours, 167–172.

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of the monastic orders. A spirit uncongenial, if not disaffected, breathed in the poetry of Dante and the theology of Thomas à Kempis. The Papal control of European society was weakened by the growing independence of kings. The invention of gunpowder, of the mariner's compass, of printing, and the discovery of the western continent, enormously strengthened the counter influences of industry, commerce, and new ideas, and enlarged the world beyond the stiffening grasp of Rome. Science after science set up for itself as natural and not revealed: when the earth was found to be in motion, it became a ridiculous pretension in the Vatican to stand still: with Galileo and the telescope the whole universe fell into new form, and so demanded an immeasurable expansion of its history: the organisation of knowledge on the basis of experience by Bacon, and on that of reflection by Descartes, delivered it on either hand from the dead touch of authority, and opened the way to the successive labours of Newton, Clairaut and Laplace, of Cavendish, Priestley and Lavoisier, of Franklin and Volta, which secured autonomy to the whole inorganic world. Totally banished from this field, the theologians and metaphysicians still lingered in the biological, and above all in the sociological, and confused them by their fictions; till Cabanis, Bichat and Gall pushed the conquest of natural law into the former; and Condorcet and De Maistre, as forerunners, and Comte, as 'he that should come,' drove it home through the entire breadth of the latter. By this recent annexation of the provinces of Life and Morals, the law of evolution completes its course; the ideal or speculative construction reaches its apex. In the scheme of thought, nothing remains to be supplied or removed: and if there be still anarchical destructives at work, it is due either to their being themselves behind their day, or to the practical resistance offered by retreating relics of feudal and ecclesiastical usages which have lost their meaning, yet will not take themselves off.

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D. CONCOMITANT ÆSTHETIC AND MORAL STATES.—If the progress of the human mind has always left vestiges of this order, it is certain that the movement of the intellectual faculties follows a determinate law: Man, as a thinking being, has his path prescribed by unalterable nature; and, from what he now deems true, you may forecast what he will next believe. His understanding, after discharging all but coexistences and successions from one part after another of the inorganic world, will try the same simplification upon the anthropological, and decline any other framework for its contents. In doing so, he is true to his natural way of thinking: but it does not yet follow that he is true to the *object thought*, viz. Humanity, individual and social. The mere intellectual function in it he may indeed assume to be like his own: but, in order to establish the new science, it needs to be shown that the whole body of human phenomena,—the æsthetic, the moral, the religious,—are reducible like the logical, and are exhaustively known, when their resemblances and relations in time have been learned. Comte admits that, where the interacting functions are so numerous as in our case, the conditions of exact prediction cannot be reached. But he insists that the regularity is not intellectual alone. With each stage of thought he finds associated a constant and different condition of affection, of sense of beauty, of character, marked not only in individual experience, but on the large scale of public institutions, arts, and history. Of these invariable concomitants, exhibiting an habitual consensus of feeling, thought, and action, I can only cite a few illustrative instances.

Wherever Fetichism prevails, priesthoods and temples will be absent. The supernatural powers, being nothing but concrete objects consecrated by personal caprice, superstition will be sporadic, not social: each man may keep his god in his hut, or carry him on his neck. Or, if the faith of a whole village should settle upon the same thing, it would still be accessible to all, and could be decorated or beaten according to the exigencies of the moment. It is

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not till remote objects, like the heavenly bodies, or meteoric stones that have fallen to the earth on some spot reached only by pilgrimage, attract the wonder and terror of mankind, that homage and deprecation have to be offered by deputy, and a mediator is required. And this case will not occur till the Polytheistic process has begun, and the concrete object is regarded as the *abode* only, or the *messenger* and instrument, of a Divinity whose material sign it is. Beings thus behind special phenomena of the world, or presiding over this or that kind of its stated products and events, cannot be appropriated, and are beyond the reach of private interpretation: their will and the modes of conciliating it must be learned from those who know the secrets of their nature and the rites of their appointed worship. Hence the sacerdotal order is born with Polytheism. Concurrently with its development there will be room for a marked activity of the æsthetic faculties: for, after so recent an escape from concrete divinities, there will be no repugnance to invest the gods with form; yet, as they are many, and no one has any given form, it is left to the free imagination to distinguish them by symbolical expression of their characteristic functions. The whole growth of mythology, its passage, at the point of contact with human life, into the Epos and the Drama and, in its worship, into lyric poetry and music and the dance, the rise of its temples and sculptures, the diffusion of its myths in domestic architecture and painting, combine to afford scope for the utmost influence of Art. On the other hand, the Sciences will have to contend with great difficulties, where every realm of nature is preoccupied by its own supernatural power: nor can they possibly extend, except at the expense of some ejected or humiliated Deity. Furthermore, most honoured among the gods will always be some one, who is regarded as the Protector of the land and its people; and patriotism, thus identified with religious loyalty, is intensified beyond the limits of a merely social affection, and becomes too sensitive for the control of prudence and

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the love of peace. Hence, the military spirit gains easy ascendency in polytheistic States, and tends to assume aggressive forms; and, in the moral estimates prevailing there, the heroic virtues will be supremely prized, the heroic faults will be condoned, and all beyond surrendered to neglect or contempt. In such societies, *Slavery* is a constant feature, and is maintained by the supply of captives in war. And, when judged in its historical place, as the substitute for the earlier usage of putting all prisoners to the sword, it must be recognised as an indication of milder dispositions, and as a part of the real advance which the law of development secures. The prominence, in this period, of the sacerdotal and military orders at one end of the social scale, with the surrender of the industrial arts to a servile class at the other, tended to crystallise the whole of society into a cluster of *castes;* among which the primacy of the priesthood and the proximate dignity of the soldiers in some degree foreshadowed the future relations between the spiritual and the temporal powers. But in no polytheistic age were these ever divided: religion, being national and local, with its myths in the history of the country, and its Olympus both on the map and in the heaven, was indissolubly blended with the whole life of the State and absolutely foreign to citizens of other lands. There could be no political offence that was not an impiety; and no impiety that was not a political offence. Finally, it is affirmed that 'in the ancient world, Morality, admirable as concerns the individual, was defective in domestic life, and was a total blank in social and political relations[1].' Before the way could be opened to these applications, further progress in generalisation was required.

The arrival of Monotheism dissolves these combinations in favour of new ones. Here, the unity of religion, coalescing with the unity of humanity, disregards all political limits and assumes a universal aim and organisation: its voice is the voice of many languages; its influence is felt in

[1] Littré, De la Phil. Pos. I. 52; II. 59, 60.

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all latitudes, and changes only as the magnetic needle varies without ever sleeping or being dead. By this expansion from local to human, the spiritual power at once separates itself from the temporal, and asserts itself as independent; surrendering all coercion to the State, but assuming unlimited range of persuasive regulation. Before, Law and Morals were one body of social legislation: now, they widely differ, in their extent, and in their resources for moving the will. They require, therefore, distinct organs, with qualifications by no means the same. The aptitudes for the spiritual functions may present themselves in any rank, nor does their free play of movement submit itself as yet to any rule: but energy and skill in temporal government are rarely formed without an experience through many generations, so as still to give a presumption in favour of heredity. The transition to Monotheism, giving unity to Nature as well as to Man, could not fail to be favourable to Science; taking away all restraint upon the detection of analogies and the simplification of laws, and all scruple about recognising a universal order. The æsthetic faculties, on the other hand, are almost overpowered in so vast and august a field, filled with a formless and unimaginable Deity; and would fain have back the days of picturesque mythology, and glens and groves peopled with sportive gods, to excuse the play of a light and limited fancy. They found, however, some compensating material in the pathetic elements of the Evangelists' narratives, and in traditions of saints and martyrs. And what the solemnised imagination could still achieve was the erection of majestic cathedrals, which became museums as well as monuments of art, where chapels and altars were enriched by pictures, and the tombs by sculptures, memorable in the history of genius, and the choir pealed with a music undreamed of by the ancient world. Yet more marked are the effects, in political and social life, of the severance of the temporal power from the spiritual. Where many States are embraced within the area of one Church, a pressure of severe restraint limits the

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aggressions of any one upon another; a moderating influence pervades and surrounds the field of combat, and, though spurned in the first access of passion, waits for some weary or relenting moment to interpose with mediating appeal. How often this pacifying function was actually exercised in medieval Europe by the Papacy is well known: and the international diplomacy which has now succeeded to the same office owes its efficacy to no other source; for it succeeds only so far as it represents the common moral feeling of European society and insists on the subserviency of ambition to right. The military spirit, in short, changes its attitude from offensive to defensive;—a fact especially obvious in the feudal system, which, with an organisation admirable for self-protection at home, bore with impatience, or refused to bear, the protracted strain of foreign wars. Closely connected with this was the inevitable reduction of slavery to serfdom. A servile class, never replaced by new victims of conquest needing to be coerced, but passing into a settled peasantry, is best supported by a partition of its industry between the proprietor's fields and its own allotments; and then it needs but an easy readjustment and fixed definition of the line between its obligations and its rights, to give its members the position of free cultivators, whose rent is paid in stipulated services. Here, too, entered again, with powerful co-operation, the sentiment of spiritual equality before God, of those who, in spite of their social severance, knelt together before the same altar and had need of the same prayers. Finally, the *ensemble* of these changes results in a transfer of influence from military to industrial activity; inventors succeeding to the honours of conquerors; and the sword, no longer greedy of alien treasures, being only the guardian of realised wealth and peaceful work at home. This modified sentiment involves the relative rise of the industrial classes into increasing social importance, and the deeper impress of their characteristics upon the moral feeling of communities.

We are thus brought, from surveying historically the

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concomitant conditions of the human evolution, to another and concluding topic in Comte's philosophy,—viz. the Foundation and Contents of his properly *Ethical* doctrine.

E. ETHICAL DOCTRINE.—To interpret him here with precision is rendered difficult by the inconstancy of his analysis of the human capacities and instincts. At one time, they are divided into intellectual, affective, and active: at another, into 'personality' and 'sympathy;' and then again they are distributed as functions of all the phrenological organs, although each one of these performs all the parts, of thinking, feeling, willing, and is both an exercise of the Ego and attracted to something other than itself. These cross divisions will probably adjust themselves in the way most true to his thought, if the cerebral classification, which is brought into Sociology ready made from the previous Biological studies, be taken as fundamental, furnishing a complete list of the ultimate components of our nature. Among these, groups may then be formed on different principles of division; yielding, for example, three sets, if we go by the relative preponderance in them of thought, feeling, and objective energy; or two sets, if we look to the ascendency in them of self-regard and of regard for others[1].

Without exhibiting Comte's emendation of Gall's map of the brain, it will suffice to state his general law, that the instincts of the self-seeking organs are by nature invariably stronger than those of the sympathetic. Yet, he maintains, this initial advantage is lost in the process of development, and goes over at the final stage to the side of social benevolence. It is natural to enquire how this seeming marvel comes about. If I rightly understand Comte, he attributes

[1] It must be carefully observed that in Comte's writings the word *Personnalité* means, not *the conscious Selfdom*, but the aggregate of the grosser appetites and interested impulses. Hence, he speaks of it as 'this irresistible fatality,' and identifies it with selfish indifference to humanity. See Discours, 88 seqq.; Catéchisme, 8. 58. 'Personality,' therefore, far from being the distinctive characteristic of man, consists of precisely that which he has in common with the brutes.

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the result partly to the withdrawal of a selfish stimulus, partly to the intensifying of a social.

The former of these conditions he finds fulfilled in the disappearance of theological belief. In his view, the Christian religion is essentially the consecration of egoism, engaging the mind in one tremendous problem, how to make peace with the Infinite Power and secure eternal salvation. All that it does against the natural selfishness of man is to set up 'an Infinite egoistic Being[1]' to counteract and overbear it. 'Every believer,' he says, 'always pursues a purely individual end, the unrivalled preponderance of which tends to repress every affection unrelated to it[2].' 'The radical selfishness of the central feeling in the Catholic scheme was especially offensive to the best instincts of the feminine heart[3]:' 'corrupting the heart by an immense and incessant cupidity, and degrading the character by a servile terror[4].' Though it retains the names 'love to God' and 'love to man,' they both denote modes of mere 'self-love,' and 'are incompatible with the natural existence of benevolent instincts[5].' No theology indeed, and least of all Monotheism, can effect the regeneration of human character by basing it upon the social affections[6].

With this estimate of the Christian Monotheism, as arraying the whole power of religion against the disinterested affections, it is no wonder that Comte reckoned on the decay of faith as the hope of social morals. It would at least fling off a preoccupying interest, and allow free play to the resources of the spontaneous nature for rising above the level of self-seeking desires. And this free play it is which Positivism turns to account so effectually, as for the first time to insure the progressive growth and ultimate ascendency of social aims.

This second and constructive part of his theory I find it difficult to present with satisfactory precision, being unable to link together its component thoughts. Its preliminary

[1] Catéchisme, p. 360. [2] Discours, p. 213. [3] Ibid. 220.
[4] Ibid. 392. [5] Catéchisme, 149, 150. [6] Ibid. 264.

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principle is that, in the social evolution of humanity, it is the affective functions that take the lead and trace the lines of movement: that the classes in which these are strongest will come to the front, while the intellectual agencies will exercise only a secondary and regulating power; so that, to determine the law of advance, the main condition is, to examine the relations subsisting among the emotional springs of our nature, and any law of variation which may affect them. The goal of the Positivist being 'universal love,' and his starting-point being universal selfishness, the transformation is referred to the alliance of the rational faculties with the weaker instinct; for they will always give their vote for the general rather than the private good, and recognise Man in Society as the object of the crowning term in the hierarchy of science. If, through this reinforcement, the conflict between the opposing tendencies is no longer unequal, the scale is turned by the cast of public praise and encouragement upon the sympathetic side; for the preference of private good is only with the individual agent who gets it, and never with the spectator who sees it fall to the many or to the one. There is, moreover, a perfect consensus of the agent's own intelligence, of his sympathetic affections, and of the fellow-feeling of observers, in favour of self-forgetfulness for others' sake: while the personal desires clash, not only with them, but with each other; and cannot themselves be content without making sacrifices to the benevolent instincts. The development of character in the direction of disinterestedness was further aided by the separation in Christendom of Morals from Law, and the habit on which the spiritual power has thus been forced to rely, of resorting for its influence, not on enforced rules, but on winning ideals, a change which, when fully carried out, replaces the obedience of fear by that of spontaneous aspiration, and, instead of stereotyping morals, leaves them open to unlimited amelioration and enlargement; and, as these ideals must be moulded from heroic and saintly examples, inevitably *humanises* whatever appeals to us with

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Divine authority. In the selection of its ideals, the Church unconsciously contravened its own doctrine and virtually inaugurated the worship of Humanity,—and *that* in the very form which becomes permanent in Positivism. For while in its theory of the *Incarnation*, the dominant ecclesiastics *meant* to insist upon the *infinite contrast* of the two elements united, the Son of God and the Son of Man,—to wrap up all the claims to worship in the former phrase, and to reserve the latter for the mortal weakness, the moral temptations, the touches of sorrow and passages of tears, which interweave the pathos with the life of Christ,—the natural instincts of the worshippers were too strong for the antithesis, and concentrated their reverence on precisely the human incidents of the Evangelists' story, and prayed to Him who had been weary and athirst and troubled in spirit, who had cried to heaven in agony, and breathed out His soul upon the cross; they took *the man* to be their God, and used the concomitant Divinity only to give all conceivable expansion to the inward scale of His experience. Nor could the hierarchy stop here: from the 'Holy Child' the consecration was carried back by an irresistible impulse to the mother who cared for His infancy and won His obedience and watched Him to the very foot of the cross: they who had been so united in life could not be kept asunder in public homage; and Mariolatry arose by inevitable sequence. Yet here there was no pretence of Godhead at all; it was an ideal woman to whom the knee was bent and on whom the eye of aspiration was fixed, and who inspired for some centuries half the literature of devotion. It is well known that this was an unwelcome change to the Catholic authorities, but was too congenial with the temper of a chivalric age to be resisted with effect; and, especially in Spain and Italy, a place had to be conceded to it. It was the settlement of a permanent religious feeling upon humanity, pure and simple; and the recognition of its feminine characteristics as best representing its perfection. Positivists do but generalise this conception, releasing it from the individual person

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of Mary, and incorporating it in their doctrine and cultus as true for the whole future evolution of mankind. Such an ideal powerfully strengthens the disinterested affections and compensates their natural weakness: though never fully realised, it is approachable through the reverence directed upon it; and the consciousness and experience of this secures to it a real efficacy which cannot be claimed for the hope of a future life[1].

Such appears to be the combination on which Comte depends for the subjection of 'personality' to 'sociability:' —the consensus of more numerous though weaker instincts, the accumulating pressure of public opinion, and the influence of revered ideals.

It only remains to remark that the state of altruism thus reached is what Comte means by '*morality*.' Any being, actuated by benevolent instincts, is *ipso facto* a *moral* being. And if to this condition he adds the imaginative contemplation of a perfect social future, in which the same disposition shall nowhere fail, he is thereby constituted a *religious* being.

§ 3. *Estimate of the System.*

The foregoing sketch aims, not to give a complete compend of Positivism, but merely to bring together the chief assumptions and junctures in its philosophical framework, which tell upon its ethical doctrine and render it comparable with other modes of approaching the theory of Morals. In conformity with this design I must now take up its leading principles, one by one, with a view to verify or check them; and, first, its account of the

A. LIMITS OF KNOWLEDGE.—The doctrine on this head is summed up in two propositions: phenomena we may know as synchronous or successive, but not causes; and by phenomena we are to understand observable physical

[1] Discours, 351–354.

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changes. Before criticising the proposition 'All we know is phenomena,' I would fain learn whether it is offered as a definition or as a substantive assertion. If you say, 'the perception of external changes is all that *we mean* by *knowledge*,' I shall have to test your definition by pursuing the word through its accepted usages, and trying whether such an account accurately fits them, or is too tight to cover their contents. If, on the other hand, you take the conception of 'knowledge' as settled and understood between us, and affirm that the mental act so named is complete in the idea of a phenomenon in and by itself, the affirmation can be put to the proof only by laying out the particulars of the mental act so conceived, and ascertaining whether it adds on anything to the raw material of the sensible impression, or is exhausted in the change of feeling. With Comte, the proposition is neither justified as a definition, nor supported as an assertion, but is dogmatically thrown down as if it were self-evident; often with a rude impatience of feeling, 'That is my knowledge: if yours is anything else, it is a chimera.' In other words, he takes for granted, without more ado, the postulate of the empirical school, and by a retrograde step starts again from the abandoned data of the eighteenth century philosophy.

We shall better estimate this assumption, if we first give Comte the benefit of a changed expression under which he frequently presents it. The 'Absolute,' he tells us, is beyond the range of the intellect: we know only 'the relative.' This, which he supposes to be identical with the maxim 'we know only phenomena,' is in fact its direct contradictory. In knowing 'the relative,' we necessarily have to deal with two terms, and the act of intelligence consists in apprehending how they stand towards one another; and to say that we know only one of them, and not the other, is to knock on the head the relativity to which we have just awarded the cognitive monopoly. It is precisely because all knowledge is of relations, that it is not and cannot be of phenomena alone; for the word

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'phenomenon' names only one member of a related pair: it denotes *a change*, which cannot come into thought apart from that which is the seat of change: take away the silent antithesis of the permanent or non-phenomenal, and the meaning of the word is snuffed out. If two factors enter into every act of cognition, to empty out one of them is, as the German proverb has it, 'das Kind mit dem Bade auszuschütten.' Either both are in the knowledge, or neither. To forbid our thought to pass behind the screen of phenomena is to put out the very light that shows them.

Do I then claim for the understanding a capacity for knowing 'the Absolute?' for such is the claim imputed to everyone who does not surrender without terms to the Comtean assumption. Metaphysics, it is said, deal with 'the Absolute:' Positive doctrine with 'the relative:' and the latter alone is accessible. The statement betrays a complete misconception. Both Metaphysics and Positive doctrine deal with 'the relative:' the former, with one of the members of the relation, viz. its constant ground; the latter, with the other, its variation or change. It would be just as suicidal for Metaphysics to go apart with its share and set it up in pure absolutism, as it is for Positive doctrine to run off with its phenomenon and exhibit it in vacuo: each is a senseless blank without the other; and they are differenced simply by reading the same relation from its opposite ends, and reporting, each from its own station, the view which it obtains of the other. Assuredly, 'the absolute' (i. e. the non-relative) cannot *per se* be known; because, in being known, it would, *ipso facto*, enter into relations and be absolute no more. But neither can the phenomenal, *per se*, be known, i. e. be known *as phenomenal*, without simultaneous cognition of what is *non-phenomenal*. What is it that is said to be known of phenomena? Their *coexistence* and their *succession*. But for their coexistence there must be *Space*, for their succession there must be *Time*, to hold them; and these are not phenomena, but the prior conditions of possibility for

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all phenomena, presupposed already in the very mention of them. It is objected to the metaphysical postulates of all thought, improperly called 'absolute notions,' that they do not admit of proof or disproof, and so cannot be verified. This is perfectly true; but it is equally true of the postulates of the 'positive sciences,' all of which, including the fundamental mathematical notions, go back to indemonstrable beliefs,—e. g. of externality and its dimensions;—beliefs which, having no dependence on any ulterior and higher certainty, are unsusceptible of verification and must be taken on trust, if taken at all, and if left, will withhold from existence the science which needs them for its start. M. Littré is so possessed by antipathy to 'absolute notions' as to see them through the whole course of history trying their worst to strangle their relative enemies at the birth. They are never tired of the strife, and always beaten from the field. 'The struggle with Galileo about the earth's motion is but an episode in this long drama better known than the rest. Between absolute and relative notions the decisive point is this, that the demonstration which is always impossible for the first is always available for the second[1].' The bugbear of 'the absolute' must have become a haunting prepossession for the imagination which could find it in this controversy. All motion surely is relative; and whether it be in the earth or the sun, nothing 'absolute' can be got out of it. The competing doctrines were simply two interpretations of a set of confessedly relative phenomena.

The word 'phenomenon,' I need hardly say, is borrowed from the vocabulary of vision, denoting originally that which is offered to the sense of sight. Of the mere sensation corresponding with the affection of the optic nerve, such as might arise in the eel or snail, we should hardly use it: a simple change of feeling, unless it be observed, does not earn the word; and for this purpose, it is not enough that the sensorium be acted on: the change must be dealt with

[1] De la Phil. Pos. 63.

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by thought in two ways, viz. referred to an object that gives it, and taken home to the subject that has it; and then first it passes from sensation into perception. Neither of these references,—to an external cause whence it comes, and to an internal self on whose thread of consciousness it assumes its place, belongs to the mere animal Sense: both are judgments added by the Understanding, and are characteristics exclusively of intelligent natures. Nor are they derivative judgments, dependent on inference and generalisation, but original and spontaneous; being essential conditions of the first perceptive act as much as of the last, and containing, in the ideas of outward cause and of inward self, the fundamental categories of all experience and all inference from it. These modes of handling the passive material of sensation are the functional activity of the intellect itself, which certainly we can never verify or refute until we are able to go behind ourselves. As essential to constitute phenomena, yet not, like phenomena, made up of the matter of sensation, they are primary thought-forms or *Noumena;* and so far as, in this capacity, it is possible to discuss their validity, they fall to the province of Metaphysics; while the sensory elements and variations of phenomena, in order to be classed and measured, resort to the sciences of observation. There is here no desertion of phenomena, no transcending of them, but simply an analysis of them as given to sense and moulded by reason: no abandonment of relativity, but the closest scrutiny of relations between the constituents of every fact: no pretence of escape into the 'absolute,' but simply a recognition of some non-phenomenal ground to which phenomenal variations stand related.

Among the notions which the intellect demands for the interpretation of phenomena is that of Causality. On Comte it seems to have a peculiarly provocative effect: his rebuke is never sharper than when directed upon 'the search for causes.' A great part, however, of his polemic against it, though not intended to spare it at all, really applies only to

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illegitimate or superfluous uses of it in the methods and literature of the natural sciences. His position seems unassailable when he insists that from observation and experiment, however resolved and generalised, nothing can be learned but *the order*, i.e. the *laws* of concomitance and succession, among the changes of the world; and further, that to know these is all that is required for the consummation of scientific ambition, viz. the *prevision* of the course of nature. And in cases (like that of gravitation) where dynamic ideas enter into the expression of ascertained laws, the possibility must be granted to him of dispensing with the language of Force, and translating the law into terms of mere time, space, and motion. And again, not a few discoverers in the past must plead guilty to his charge of mistaking a mere generalised fact for an efficient entity, and so setting up as many independent forces as there are dissimilar classes of phenomena, without being aware that they are only mentally invented and not physically found. But to what do these concessions amount? They simply dislodge causes from the list of phenomena, and forbid the perceptive faculty to be on the look-out for them: just as you might restrain it from attempting to establish the infinitude of Space. But do they discredit the idea and belief of causality behind or within the advent of phenomena? Not in the least. Do they make it absurd to think that something is needed to determine the phenomena to be so and not otherwise, and make their order to be this, and not that? These questions they do not even approach; and these cover the whole demands of the doctrine of causality. It remains all the while certain that of every witnessed phenomenon *Cause* is just as much an inseparable correlative as *Space:* by an equally imperative intellectual law we have to think of it as out of the one and in the other: they are alike intuitive conditions of all experience; and the proposal to divest experience of either is like the attempt to peel a bubble in search for its colours and contents: 'in tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram.'

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It is the less necessary to push the vindication of the idea of causality beyond the range of Comte's objection, because of late Science, though quite able to express its truths in terms of simple antecedence and sequence, has shown less and less disposition to conform to such a simplification, and does not hesitate to allow dynamical conceptions (which are intermediary between the causal and the phenomenal) to permeate its whole account of 'laws,' and even substitute an enumeration of *forces* for a classification of facts. That under cover of this tendency illusions may easily creep in cannot be denied. But when we compare the facility of thought and investigation which is thus obtained, with the artifices required in order to conceive, e.g. of the law of gravitation, without any idea of attraction, the presumption seems strong that nature reports herself most truly in the dialect of causal energy, and by her awkward submission protests that the commensurate formulas of 'coexistence and succession' are the fictitious equivalents. It is true that, were the universe resolved into grouped and regimented phenomena, no science would be evicted; but the fact that the most skilled expositors of even physics and chemistry cannot dispense with the conceptions of action and reaction, of pressure, of affinity, of repulsion, bears witness that for the severest intellects science does not speak the last word, but opens the door to an ulterior audience-chamber of philosophy. Nay, this witness is again and again borne by Comte himself. He speaks of the doctrine of equilibrium, of the periodicity of the planetary perturbations, and of other problems of physical astronomy, in language unmeaning in a world of mere coexistence and succession. He recognises *intensities*, greater or less, which can be predicated only of force, and must be fluxionally rather than differentially conceived. And he lays stress on the *modifiable* character of natures in proportion to their complexity, and founds upon it the rules of human self-government and the encouragement to social advance. How, in the absence of agents who operate on

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themselves or others, and of 'antecedents' that *cause* their 'consequents,' this feature of complex structures can be turned to account, it is not easy to conceive; or how there can be evinced a capacity of being modified, without any corresponding power of modifying.

A second limitation is imposed by Comte on human knowledge, by banishing from it all the supposed objects of introspective self-consciousness. 'By an invincible necessity the human mind can directly observe all phenomena except its own.'

This exclusion of all psychological self-knowledge, and consequent restriction of the word 'phenomena' to external changes, is so paradoxical in itself, and so little consistent with Comte's own experience and history, that it is difficult to treat it as the expression of an indigenous conviction; and I am disposed to regard it as a floating relic of Gall's inauspicious influence; the more so, because the argument by which he supports it is the stock argument current among the phrenologists. It runs thus. In order to know, you must look at what is proposed for knowledge, and therefore must stand outside it: you cannot stand outside your own states of mind: they are at no distance from yourself, but are identical with yourself: it is, therefore, impossible for you to know them. If this evidence is conclusive, we should all be reduced to confess a more than Socratic ἀμαθία, and each would be obliged to say, 'I do not know whether I feel hot or cold, pleased or angry, self-contented or ashamed; whether I remember or forget the features of my friend; whether I am thinking of Darwin's theory or Mr. George's; whether I am stirred by any motive, or, if by two, whether they pull the same way or opposite ways.' No abstract piece of reasoning can bear the strain of consequences so absurd; and, in spite of it, every one will admit the 'positive' *fact* of self-knowledge in the instances adduced. I shall venture then to find a way out of the argument, by simply turning it round. Instead of insisting, 'Identity of subject and object render

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knowledge of the latter impossible: the self-conscious mind is identical with its own states: therefore, it cannot know them;' I will say, 'Identity of subject and object render knowledge of the latter impossible: the self-consçious mind knows its own states; therefore, it is not identical with them:'—a conclusion which at once detects the phrenological fallacy. Thinker and thought, Feeler and felt, Chooser and choice, are not rendered identical by their joint internal seat, and the absence of any local distance furnishing for one a station from which it looks at the other. Objectivity is not given by externality alone: the separation from the attending mind which it requires may be supplied by *Time* as well as *Space;* and when we direct introspection upon our mental states, they must already be in the past, since the introspection itself is in possession of the present. They are thus qualified to become our 'objects,' as we are to be the 'subjects' that know them. As subjects, we are always knowers, always feelers, always agents; while the changes, of thought, of feeling, of volition, that either arrive at us or go from us, are by their very movement and transiency presented to our apprehension and ranged upon the continuous thread of our personal history.

Reserving the direct vindication of self-reflection for future chapters on Psychological Ethics, I gladly leave the case at present to rest upon the cautious but adequate defences of Stuart Mill and Lewes, both of whom, notwithstanding their admiration for Comte, declined to surrender the whole literature of mental and logical philosophy to the fear of his wrath [1]. One remark only I would add to Mill's effective criticism. To Comte's demand that what is called 'psychology' should be flung as mere cerebral function into the physiology of the brain, inasmuch as all its uniformities are derivative from molecular changes there, he replies that we are hardly entitled to assume this, so long as we are far more in the dark about the molecular changes than about

[1] Mill's Logic, B. VI. ch. iv. § 2. Lewes, on Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences, P. I. § 20.

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the mental uniformities, and that the latter, being independently ascertainable and of serious concern to us, are meanwhile a proper object of separate study. As a provisional plea, deriving its force from the present condition of cerebral knowledge, the answer is adequate. But does it not concede too much to a philosopher who disowns the idea of causality, yet is here building his whole argument upon it? The mental series of changes must not, it seems, be admitted to separate study and reduction to law, because they are *derivative from* the cerebral: if they were only constantly parallel, they would have a right to form a science of their own. Suppose that we had reached perfect knowledge of the brain, and could read and register every molecular movement in its exact time-relation to the changes in our consciousness: what would be the difference, in the absence of causation, of a *derivative* series and a *parallel* series? Invariable antecedence and sequence being all that we have on hand, we cannot speak of any one term *producing*, or *failing to produce* another that follows it, whether in the same line or in its counterpart: the whole account must run in terms of Time. The story then would come out as follows: Let A, B, C represent three consecutive molecular changes in the brain; and α, β, γ the three corresponding feelings. Then, on the occurrence of

A,	follows	B,	so	C
follows		so		so
α		β		γ.

Now the only way of determining to *what* series the several items belong is to find their 'immediate' or 'proximate' antecedents, and to link together the terms thus selected as coming under the cognisance of the same science. Let us trace the working of this rule. A is proximately followed by B, say, in a second: it is also followed by α, also, let us say, in a second. B is similarly followed, in another second, by C, and by β. β therefore is just one second removed from both α and B, which will therefore have, by the rule of proximity, to quarrel for possession of it; and the same

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dispute will arise between β and C, and so on all along the series. Nor will the case be mended by assuming an interval between the two sequents (physical and mental) upon the molecular change. If you put the cerebral consequent first, you make it the proximate antecedent of the mental which belongs to its predecessor: if the mental comes first, it is turned into proximate antecedent of the next physical; and the two series fall into cross purposes throughout; and the passage in time-succession is just as frequent from the mental to the physical as from the physical to the mental. The truth is, Comte's absorption of psychology into physiology not only rests entirely on the causality which he repudiates, but gives it action from the material to the mental, while withholding it from the inverse direction. What he really thinks is this,—that the molecular change *produces* its thought change, while no thought change *produces* either another or any molecular. And yet the time-order is exactly the same as would be required by the causal law when cut down to the rule of invariable sequence.

The false identification of subject and object which is the plea for rejecting self-knowledge involves a doctrine of *personality* which reverses the psychological conception of it, and marks more distinctly, or at least more fundamentally, than any other feature, the difference which alienates Gall and Comte from the metaphysician. The unity of the *ego* to which all felt changes are brought home, its persistent identity through ever varying affections, is regarded by the latter as an ultimate postulate, which experience cannot give, because without it experience cannot be given. By the phrenologists, on the other hand, it is regarded as built up piecemeal from the contributions of several faculties, cemented together by concurrent action, their multiplicity being concealed from feeling by their simultaneousness. The unity, therefore, is last instead of first; and is an illusion instead of a reality. As it must cost more to unify a larger number of constituents than

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a less, so complex a being as man cannot so readily be set up into an *ego* as one of the lower animals; and Comte accordingly asserts that the sense of personality is much stronger in them than in him. If we could follow down this numerical reduction far enough, and scrutinise the feeling of some being with but a single function, we ought to find the conscious self-identity made absolute in a spinning animalcule. This, however, would not follow, unless on the assumption commended by the Mills, that 'to have a feeling and to know that you have it' are one and the same thing; whereas Comte, as we have seen, contends that if the feeling is yours, you cannot know it. He therefore requires some organ of knowledge to be added on to the organs of feeling and impulse, before self-consciousness can be claimed; and though he will not own it as a human characteristic, he does not carry it below a certain grade of complexity of nature. In this demand of cognitive functions, distinct from sensitive and active, he is favourably distinguished from Gall and later phrenologists; with whom it is an established principle that each organ has its own appropriate objects, and with these objects does all the kinds of work that may be required,—feels them, remembers them, compares, discriminates, and judges them; these processes, in fact, involving each other, and being only different aspects of one faculty. As each organ has but its single function, this amounts to saying, that feeling, memory, comparison, judgment, are all one, and that each of these terms taken as subject has all the rest as its predicates: that feeling, for example, remembers, compares, judges; and memory feels, compares, judges, &c.; in which case feeling certainly knows itself, not to say a good deal more; and, in denying the possibility of self-knowledge, Gall involves himself in contradiction. Within the unity of a solitary organ there are the knower and the known: identity of subject and object is provided for, without forfeiture of cognition. Under these conditions a single organ would suffice to set up a self-conscious

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personality; and a compound being, like man, would be an aggregate of persons, packed together into one figure, like the multitudinous monster made up of pigmies which stands in the frontispiece of Hobbes's 'Leviathan' to represent the State. From this absurdity Comte guarded himself by removing the knowing function into separate lodgings, and then admitting that where the organs of feeling and of cognition were different, self-inspection ceased to be impossible.

But in thus shaking subject and object out of their coalescence he encounters the opposite danger, of setting the one outside the other, as my hand and another's hand are alike outside of my eye that sees them, and my voice and another's voice are alike beyond my ear that hears them. If one organ knows what another organ feels, where is the unity of the knower and the feeler? And where there are numerous organs strange to each other's feelings and incapable of interchanging them, and all are known as heterogeneous through a cognitive group different from all, how is it that the host of incommensurable changes emerging from this composite apparatus insist on being treated throughout as predicates of the same subject? It is admitted, indeed contended, that they are not phenomena of a unitary being. 'Man is eminently multiple,' says Comte; using this phrase to denote, not the variety of capacities committed to the same indivisible agent, but the many organs of which now this group, and now that, may successively wake into energy and constitute the agent for the time being. Yet it cannot be denied that, to every one, doubt is impossible of the simple persistency of his personal essence through all his changes of mood and character. The question at issue is, therefore, what is the order of true relation under which we are to conceive the two recognised facts, the *personal unity* and the *faculiative plurality* of the human being. The psychologist accepts and trusts the report of natural consciousness, and believes that the one individual manifests the many phenomena.

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Comte reverses the conception, and from the concurrence of many independent functions derives an illusory feeling of individuality. Asked to explain the mode of its origin, he can only assure us that it is merely the '*sympathy*' or the '*synergy*' of the several faculties,—words which account for nothing; for that several organs should *feel in combination*, or should *act in combination*, can never teach us that there is *no combination at all*. If each organ has its own feeling (and else there is no sympathy) how can the simultaneous existence of a number be nevertheless *not a number* but only *one?* And, amid continual change of the particular organs subscribing to make up an act or state, how can the resultant unity, the conscious self, remain the same? The thief who, under the excitement of acquisitiveness, secretiveness, and destructiveness, breaks open my house, shoots my servants, and carries off my plate, owes his individuality to the 'synergy' of these select endowments. Some awakening conversion brings into action his latent conscientiousness, benevolence, and veneration, and, struck with remorse, he makes confession and reparation. But the factors of his personality are now a different set of powers, and the product of their synergy cannot therefore be the same: the man who stole is not the man who repents: the crime he bewails was the crime of another; his compunction is vicarious; and the postulates of all natural contrition are false. Every attempt to conceive of the personal essence of the human being as a mere confluence of independent streams of activity must end in such absurd and mischievous results; and incur the disadvantage of contradicting the fundamental deposition of all our consciousness, without even the compensation of a plausible explanation of its origin. As to the assertion that the feeling of personality is not peculiar to man, the only proof of it offered by Comte is, that a cat is not found to mistake herself for another: which is true enough, since she must then know a difference between other and same. Need we say that such a blunder would

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be an instance of the very self-consciousness, only mistaken instead of correct, whose total privation it is intended to exemplify. *Absence of the idea* of self is not evinced by making erroneous propositions about self: on the contrary, there can be no better proof that the idea is there. The proper effects of conscious personality are the ascription to oneself, as identical subject, of our own acts and states, as our changing predicates: so that, over and above the doing the acts and having the states, we know that we do them and have them; and the inevitable conformity of our affections to this hypothesis; so that we cannot help feeling responsible as agents for our acts and states in a way which would be groundless if they were our factors instead of our products. These effects are undoubtedly human; and till the Positivist cat makes some further proficiency beyond the mere keeping clear of an *alias*, we shall continue to hold them *characteristically* human.

Comte's unjust antipathies are usually the inverted expression of some true insight and worthy admiration, tempted, by a partisan disposition, to turn harmonious opposites into inveterate enemies. In his disaffection towards the psychologists he loves to display before them, to the shame of their barren introspection, the copious fruits to be gathered from the *objective* study of men, whether of other persons in the living world around, or of the intellectual products of individual genius and social experience, in language, science, literature, and laws. Logic is to be learned from the recorded reasonings of great discoverers: the categories of thought and the processes of abstraction from the history and moulds of speech: the rules of beauty from the *chefs-d'œuvre* of painting, sculpture, poetry, and music; and the characteristics of Morals, from the development of public sentiment and the growth of codes in civilised States. All this is salutary truth; but it is truth so little opposed to the psychologist's method, that he alone is qualified to avail himself of it. If he were blind to his own internal history, he would stand

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amid this magnificent assemblage of spiritual treasures, and stare at them, like the cattle, without any key of interpretation. If he could not analyse his own thought, how could he test the reasoner's appeal to it, and use him as an exponent of the ways of the human mind? If he admired, without power of reflecting on his admiration, and of separating the elements of beauty from the common and unclean, in sensible and in moral experience, Phidias and Sophocles, Dante, Raphael, Shakspeare, and Beethoven would teach as much æsthetics to an idiot as to him. And so of morals: were there no self-consciousness of different claims among the springs of action, how could examples of Pity and Cruelty, of Honour and Perfidy, speak to us respectively with inspiring or hateful voices? How could the sentiments of others wake the response of inward content or shame, were there not chords already vibrating there with the same preluding strain? It is the self-conscious life in each that throws open to intelligence the cumulative products of self-consciousness in all. There is doubtless perpetual action and reaction between the two, and the reflective power gains immensely in the school and museum of its own historical results. But to treat these results as its source and not its fruits, and exhort it to renounce itself in order to study them, is to put out the light the better to see the way.

B. CONTENTS AND ORDER OF KNOWLEDGE.—Three years before the publication of the *Philosophie Positive* appeared the first volume of Dr. Neil Arnott's *Elements of Physics*; the introduction to which presents a classification of the sciences identical with Comte's, except in two particulars: (1) the Mathematics (in their higher researches) are taken last instead of first; and (2), as by Mill and Lewes, Psychology is withdrawn from the category of Physiology, and is prefixed (under the heading *Mind*) to the laws of Justice, Morals, Politics, embraced by Comte under the name *Sociology*. The transposition of the mathematics is due to the predominance, in Arnott's mind, of an educational purpose, and is more apparent than real. In effect,

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he divides mathematical studies into two stages; of which he presumes the more elementary to be brought by the learner in ready condition to the first natural science: while the second and more recondite is postponed till the problems requiring them have been encountered, and have furnished the incentive to further proficiency. The theoretical priority he does not deny to the mathematics; but, for his educational purpose, the theory waives a portion of its rights in concession to practical convenience. The last term of the Positivist series,—the Science of Humanity,—did not (in Arnott's mind) by any means anticipate Comte's conception of Sociology; its contents, though made up of the same subjects, present but a miscellaneous assemblage of special topics, unorganised by any central and disposing idea. They probably never came within the range of the physician's serious studies, so as to suggest to him any deeper interior relations among them than might direct the arrangement of a library catalogue of the 'moral and political sciences.' But, so far as the order is concerned in which the successive strata of knowledge are superimposed from the base to the apex of the pyramid, the coincidence (assuredly unconscious) is remarkable. It bears witness to the entire dominance obtained over the minds of contemporary men by the achievements of the natural sciences, and to the consequent conviction that every problem will yield to the same methods, till all the movements in the world, from the swaying of the tides to the flashes of genius and the revolutions of nations, disclose a single organism of homogeneous law.

I have ventured to modify Comte's hierarchy of knowledge by throwing *Astronomy* into Physics, and have affirmed that this is more true to his idea than his separation of the two. To render this position clear, I must remark that, when objects are disposed (like Comte's sciences) in the order of their relative 'simplicity,' there are two measures of simplicity between which the choice intended should be distinctly announced. When Hartley speaks of 'a simple

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idea of sensation,' he means the image or vestige left on the mind by a single object, e.g. an orange. When Locke speaks of 'a simple idea' he means the idea of any single quality of an object or a kind of objects, e.g. the *form* of an orange, or its *size*, or its *smell*, all of which would be comprised together within Hartley's simple idea, making it in Locke's view highly complex. In awarding the epithet, the one looks to unity of object, the other to unity of quality. The difference lies between concrete and abstract simplicity. In the former case, the universe is conceived as made up of an indefinite assemblage of individual things; in the latter, of a small number of attributes whose various combinations constitute and classify all individual things. If two minds could fully represent the cosmos to themselves in these two ways respectively, the one would think of it in its extension, the other in its comprehension. In conformity with this distinction, Comte discriminates 'Concrete sciences' from 'Abstract sciences[1];' the former selecting for study some particular group of objects, or even a single object, and trying to refer all its phenomena to their respective laws; the latter fastening upon some type of phenomenon or property that reappears in many a group, and determining its conditions and rules, irrespective of their application to this or that. The latter alone fulfil the proper requirements of science, being intellectually free from all restrictions of place and time, and going wherever the steps of a spreading law may lead them; and only after they have worked out their general formulas, can the concrete sciences address themselves to a detached family of individual things, with the necessary keys for interpreting their facts. You cannot give account of the phenomena of any object without having recourse to a plurality of sciences: a drop of quicksilver exercises your Mathematics and Physics; of water, your Chemistry; of blood, your Physiology as well: and if each of these separately be a science, the accidental use of excerpts from several of them together

[1] Phil. Pos. I. 70.

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will not constitute another. It would be better to withhold the name 'science' altogether from such pursuits as Mineralogy, Botany, Conchology, Meteorology, Geology, which define themselves by their interest in integral objects, whether taken singly or classified by external characters, and to treat them all as part of 'Natural History,' regarded as a study of arrangement subservient to the practical arts. Comte adopts this principle in the case of Geology, as 'the special study of the earth, entirely dependent on all the fundamental sciences,' and simply applying them without adding one new scientific element[1]. But it is just as applicable to the special study of the stars, and equally removes Astronomy from the category of 'pure science;' the greatest of all discoveries in its field consisting in the annulling of all fancied laws of its own, and the identification of celestial with terrestrial physics. It cannot have a separate place, except upon a list of the so-called 'Concrete sciences.' In the hierarchy rising from the base of abstract simplicity, it merges mainly in Physics, with a certain minor interest in Chemistry, and even, Sir W. Thomson would persuade us, in Biology.

It seems evident that the difference between Arnott and Comte in the allocation of Mathematics could not possibly have arisen except in the case of this particular term in the series. Physics, e.g. would not bear transposition with Chemistry or Biology. Yet it does not appear to us impossible to postpone our measurement of quantity till after we have become acquainted with the qualities to be measured, from the most familiar (i.e. general or simple) to the least so. Why is this? If the relations of each term to the next above it were the same all through, following merely the rule of diminishing empirical generality, the Mathematics ought to be as irremovable as any other member of the set. In Comte's view, the relation *is* the same: he attaches extension,—the ground of geometry,—and number,—that of calculus,—as qualities or attributes,

[1] Phil. Pos. I. p. 73; Littré, p. 80.

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to the objects of our sensible experience, and supposes them disengaged thence in thought by abstraction, in exactly the mode which furnishes us with the notions of solidity and weight. The axioms of Mathematics are no less inductions from experience than the assumptions of the succeeding sciences; only, they are drawn from simpler experience, and immediately pressed into the service of ulterior inference, and yield the maximum of deduction from the minimum of induction,—from so little indeed that it is almost *nil* and puts on the appearance of intuition[1]. Of the well-known difficulties of this doctrine he was apparently unaware: e.g. that the axioms *per se* are absolutely barren and yield no inference, though regulating all: that without the presuppositions of space and time, in which the axioms are already implicit, there can be no experience, and therefore no induction: that extension and duration cannot belong to objects, as their phenomena, on the same terms with solidity and weight, because their extension and duration would be there on their own account, whether the objects were present in them or not; and that they are so far from being dependent affections of things, passing into mere figments of thought when separated from such finite receptacles, that the samples we meet with are only marked off from a real infinitude and eternity. Is it not, then, more correct to say that they are the *conditions* of existence for bodies, than that they are among their phenomena? Certainly, the *pre-existence* which must be assigned to them can be predicated of no other corporeal properties. The prerequisites of Mathematics are pure quantities, viz. Space, as susceptible of ideal limitation by coexisting division; Time, as susceptible of limitation by successive division or counting. The prerequisites of Physics are certain qualities of all sensible objects; of Chemistry, other qualities affecting them with differences; of Biology, still further qualities, adding a higher story of differences. The distinction, therefore, between the first and second term is quite other than

[1] Littré, pp. 84, 85. 91.

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that between the second and third, which, once introduced, repeats itself in the subsequent steps. For this reason, a more satisfactory classification would be gained by erecting the science of quantity into an order separate from the sciences of quality; the former giving the *à priori* conditions of experience, the latter its abstracted results, arranged on the scale of contracting generality. A very ordinary and inexact experience suffices to instruct us in the steps of this scale, and enables us to understand that all things, e.g. have weight, but that not all things combine like the powders of an effervescing draught, and still fewer are alive, and that to know more about these three things, we must go to a different kind of book for each; so that the rude outline of the qualitative series would readily form itself in an unmathematical mind. But on nearer approach it is soon found that all qualities (whether because resolvable into motion, or not) are susceptible of varying intensity, and that with such variations their phenomena regularly change, and new relations among them arise; so that the need for *measurement* becomes imperative, and the advance of knowledge must wait till the methods of quantitative determination hasten to its aid. Theoretically, it would have been more in order, if they had been ready for the emergency by perfecting themselves first, and planting all their calculating engines on the field before anybody asked for them. But, in point of fact, the great achievements in mathematics have appeared in answer to the requirements of some grand physical problem, else unmanageable; trigonometry working itself out to solve the perplexities of the engineer and the astronomer; the geometry of curves enlarging itself to express the detected laws of caustics and of the pendulum, and Newton's labours compelling him to make his own tools as he went along. This fact may well have induced Arnott to treat the Mathematics rather as emerging from the mixed sciences than as their prelude. Nor does their theory, rightly understood, bind them to the same priority to Physics that Physics must hold to Chemistry.

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But a far more serious question arises as we approach the summit of Comte's classification. Through its inorganic stages and the vegetable and animal physiology at the next step, he is partitioning *the scene* which environs our existence; but now, at last, he arrives at the *being himself* who is so environed: it is *Man* that has here to get known; and man also that has to be the knower. Does this make no difference? Does it allow the simple continuity of the previous method of procedure, as if this new object were also exposed freely to view in the outward field, and amenable to perceptive observation? This is precisely what Comte assumes, and what is required by his extension of the same axis through this crowning apex. For reasons already stated, this assumption cannot be admitted. Not the best eyesight in the world, with the most careful register and comparison of what it shows, whether applied to the movements of living populations or the surviving products of the dead, will tell you more of human kind than you have found it possible to learn of the swallows or the bees. Yet certainly there is more to be known: there are phenomena which are invisible, nay, whole dramas of conflict and catastrophe behind the scenes, often constituting the very crises and defining the essence of life, to which we should be for ever blind, were we not ourselves the scene as well as the spectator. It is true that this secret history does not die in silence: it speaks out in various forms of art and language: but these signs would say nothing to us, had we not in us the things signified. Self-consciousness, in short, lifts the veil of a new world; and in that new world it is, and not in the physical and chemical, that is found the Humanity, personal and social, which it remains for us to know when we have finished the last page of our biology. The series is here broken, because we alight upon not merely phenomena that are *sui generis*, but upon a mode of knowing that is *sui generis*; and the laws that may emerge, being without contact, though parallel, with those already determined, take up nothing of their contents, and have no

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claim to be their successors and consummation. Every affection has its history in two directions which have no common segment: it radiates outwards into visible action: it passes inwards, and, impinging on the self-consciousness, undergoes reflections and refractions, the lines of which no visual organs can trace and no skilled bystander compute. If, when we come to treat of the human affections, we refuse to quit the old path of external observation, we miss the whole tissue of this interior life. If, on the other hand, we gather up its perceptible products in language, arts, and laws, and study these as if they spake for themselves, we credit them with a significance gained from an unnoticed source, and tacitly use material of which we have given no account. This is the fallacy of method into which Comte unwittingly falls. He denies and derides the mind's self-knowledge; and then, in a fit of somnambulism, applies its secret key to the vast edifice of social and moral existence which it has constructed and adorned, and moves about through its cloisters and memorial chapels, interpreting them all under the illusion that he is still standing in the plain outside.

Self-consciousness, then, involves in its very nature the dualism of knowledge, and makes it impossible to range the inner phenomena which it reveals, in one series with the varieties of motory change cognisable by external perception. The chasm between movement and feeling is impassable: from the nicest reading of either, no idea can be gained of the other; and the more you succeed in proving their eternal parallelism, the more hopeless becomes their continuity or coincidence. Each must take its own initiative, and trace its separate course; one supplying the axis for the sciences of outward nature; the other, the axis for those of self-conscious man. Around the latter, psychology, æsthetics, morals, individual and social, group themselves and vindicate their independent essence, without forgetting their constant relation with the corresponding points of the former. Nor need these human studies wait

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to begin till, in arranging the objects on the external scene, we at last alight on man: it is only as noticeable object in the world that he is reserved for that place: but, as knowing subject, he learns himself as soon as he learns anything besides: he cannot prick himself without becoming acquainted with the pain, along with the form of the finger and the pin; and all through the rising stages of Comte's hierarchy, from the simplest to the most complex intellectual apprehensions, he gains simultaneous insight into the objects of his thought and into his own processes in thinking them; so that in becoming an astronomer, a chemist, a physiologist, he is at least gathering materials which have only to be brought into the focus of his intelligent attention to render him also a psychologist and a logician. The scientific order of nature has thus its necessary reflection in the mental development; and it might be supposed that the phenomena of self-consciousness could not do better than copy in their arrangement the intellectual construction of the natural series. For various reasons, however, this does not hold good: among the rest, because not a tithe of the contents of our self-conscious life is embraced within the discipline of scientific culture; nor do the dealings of thought with its successive budgets of materials undergo variations at all proportionate to the differences in the materials themselves. To construct a reformed arrangement on the principle of these hints is not within the scope of my design. My purpose is simply to show that Comte's supreme stratum does not repose securely upon its base: that it needs to be lifted off and planted upon an area of its own; and that, thus placed, its contents will be found adequate, under systematic redisposition, to the formation of a second structure more worthy of its dedication to humanity than the mere attic-story of any temple of material nature.

Comte's 'encyclopædic scale' of knowledge does not remain in his hands a purely theoretical construction. It supplies him with the general law of historical genesis and

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growth among the sciences; and with the true order in which they should enter individual education[1]. I cannot but think that, in both these instances, he has been misled by the idea that he begins from the *simplest* end, which, it is natural to suppose, must be most accessible to incipient intelligence. He does so: but he overlooks the difference between the *abstract simple* and the *concrete simple*: what he takes for his scale is the former: what comes first in the intellectual history, is the latter. Accordingly, it is by no means true that, even in their elementary rules, the sciences of measurement preceded the knowledge of the things measured. What we now call 'the applied mathematics' were really the cradle of the mathematics; and it was in the arts of embanking rivers, and entrenching camps, and shaping altars, and issuing multiple coins, and learning how to find the moon, and make the shadow on the dial tell the time, that the relations of magnitude and number were first apprehended and generalised. The practical inventions and physical speculations of Thales and Anaximander had to precede the idealisation by Pythagoras of measure, number, and proportion, as the ground of the universe, and universal element of human knowledge. And though there are memorable instances, as in the diamond's estimated refraction and the figures which hinted at Neptune's invisible presence, in which purely mathematical relations have anticipated physical discovery, far more usual is the resort to calculation in order to *test* some preconception of suspected but undetermined law.

Accepting Comte's just remark, that 'the starting-point for the race is necessarily the same as for the individual,' I cannot but apply these criticisms to his prescribed order of Education. As you cannot go to work till you have got your tools, the child must no doubt be early trained to some arithmetical dexterity, both to make the faculties nimble and to serve the exigencies of common life. But even this stage is most easily passed by deserting the 'ab-

[1] Phil. Pos. pp. 84, 85; Littré, p. 90.

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stract' simplicity and taking refuge with 'concrete' objects which can be counted and combined in all sorts of visible ways. And, with most learners, it will be difficult to maintain in vigour the incentives to progress, unless a series of physical problems is presented which kindles curiosity and awakens the urgency of conscious defect. To enter upon education at the most abstract extremity of knowledge, is to forego the aid of natural propensity in early life and encounter the maximum of natural impediment. All incipient knowledge deals with concrete objects; and the intellectual aptitudes for classification and distinction are most readily formed in the natural history arrangements of integral things; and cannot better learn their first lessons of abstraction and reflective analysis than in the exercise of language and the logical interpretation of grammar. When the chief kinds of objects that fill the world, together with men's modes of handling them in speech and thought, have become familiar, the way is prepared for chasing the like phenomena through unlike kinds, and gathering up these fresh combinations into a new unit of conception; and in that moment the idea of law is born and the path of science is entered. If such be the order which best turns to account the wonderful memory and quick perception of children, while straining after no abstractions that are not cast in the moulds of common speech, it not only implies a long prelude to the period of systematic science, but places in it some studies for which Comte provides either a later place or none at all. Seven years he dedicates to physical training of the senses and the spontaneous activities, and the regulation of manners and disposition, without even any commencement of reading and writing. Seven more are given up to the fine arts and the 'Western languages,'—a courageous requirement for a child that had not reached the alphabet at seven. Not till fifteen does the seven years' scientific course begin; two being set apart for Mathematics and Astronomy, and then the same for Physics and Chemistry, at a rate, through both terms, of two lessons a week; a rate which is

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halved through the three remaining years, devoted respectively to Biology, Sociology, and Morals, with the addition, as accessories, of Greek and Latin through the final biennium. The total omission from this scheme of all *reflective studies* (except as implied in linguistic attainments), and of all 'concrete sciences,' cannot fail to strike us; and akin to this in its significance is the extremely light provision for the languages to be acquired, whether as prelude or as completion of the youth's systematic discipline: together with the strange inversion of the ancient and the modern tongues. What sort of scholarship could be expected from two years of Greek and Latin, taken as *Neben-studien* to Sociology and Morals? Nor is their misplacement in time less strange than the small allowance of it. If the matchless intellectual discipline which familiarity with these languages and their literature affords is to be given at all, it should come in time to send a finer and more practised mind into the great theatre of scientific thought, and not to be tacked on as an appendix to the human studies in which its fruits are most needed. Experience, consulted on a large scale, appears to me distinctly to prove the superiority of the scholarly men of science to the men of science pure and simple, with a thin wash of literary colour for the outside film. Instances, no doubt, there will always be of special genius wholly set apart for the interpretation of external nature or the enlargement of its subsidiary calculus; and they are not to be pressed into pursuits foreign to their possibilities of success. But plans of education must be framed for average and not for exceptional minds; and for them, I am persuaded, the greatest vigour and volume of faculty will not be reached, unless the *literæ humaniores* and, in general, the studies which exercise self-consciousness, occupy an earlier and a more continuous place than is assigned to them in Comte's scheme.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.—As the foregoing series of sciences forms itself step by step, beginning with the simplest, so does each member of it pass through three

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stages, the succession of which is determined by a law of evolution in the human mind that moulds them. It is long before man can be content to take phenomena as he finds them, and arrange them as they occur in space and time, though he comes to this at last; relinquishing the illusory search for *causes*, which had led him to refer them, first, to personal agency, and then to figments of abstraction, such as attraction, repulsion, or other variety of imaginary power. Whatever be the order of phenomena on which the mind, individual or collective, is engaged, it treats them, in its childhood, theologically; in its youth, metaphysically; in its maturity, positively. Such is the law. How far does experience verify it[1]?

If its expositor were content to say, 'When men arrive at Positivism, this is the path that brings them to it,' he would probably meet with no dissent; and to the truth contained in this conditional proposition the law in its categorical statement owes, I believe, whatever persuasive force it may possess. But, in order to turn it into the unconditional form, the assertion must be added, 'All men, in gaining acquaintance with the coexistence and succession

[1] In the sketch of Comte's life I have shown how far he had been anticipated by St. Simon in the enunciation of this law. It has been traced still further back by some keen investigators of the genealogy of ideas, and found in Turgot's second *Discours*, delivered as *Prieur* of the *Sorbonne*, Dec. 11, 1750, *Sur les progrès successifs de l'esprit humain*. Œuvres de Turgot. Paris, 1844. Tom. II. 601. But in this historical sketch of the course of civilisation from its dawn to the 18th century, there is no attempt to define the general law to which its changes are referable, although the principle is recognised that they are not arbitrary in their succession; and, in the description of the starting-point and of the position reached, the dominance of Supernaturalism in the one and of Naturalism in the other is indicated,—as, indeed, it could not fail to be. With regard to the former, e. g. Turgot says, 'The first men, struck by sensible phenomena, supposed that all effects independent of their own activity were produced by beings like themselves, only invisible and more powerful, whom they put in the place of the Deity.' 'All the objects in nature had their gods, who, formed on the pattern of men, had their attributes and their vices.' But this remark is so little original, that it belongs to the common stock of all the literature of the subject. I see not the least reason to believe that Comte had ever seen Turgot's essay.

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of phenomena, arrive at Positivism, or will do so.' This is the affirmation in which lies the questionable part of the alleged law; and Comte's unconsciousness of anything doubtful even here, his dogmatic assurance of unqualified truth, may perhaps be referred to a still remaining ambiguity of which the expression must be divested. What is meant by 'arriving at Positivism?' Is it simply *coming to know the laws of phenomena* (for in this consists Comte's '*positive* knowledge')? Or is it, along with this, *coming to think that there is nothing else to be known, and, in particular, to discard the belief in causality?* With the former sense, the proposition before us is a tautology; with the latter, it affirms as fact what is certainly not fact. Comte never parted the meanings from each other: the falsehood was for him incorporated with the tautology, and so treated as a truism which only simpletons could deny. The annihilating element of Positivism, hidden away in its wealth of knowledge,—like a bag of dynamite in a bale of silks,—passes the heedless scrutineers, and gets warehoused as honest stock, with certainty of explaining itself hereafter.

In the hope, nevertheless, of taking it out betimes, let us consider whether the individual, in learning more and more of the grouping and series of phenomena, has to unlearn his belief in their causation, and dispense with any account of them beyond their realised presence in time and space. Among the men of science down to the present day who have attained the foremost rank in their several pursuits, I do not find any large proportion that have reduced the relation of causality to that of invariable antecedence and sequence. Certainly Huyghens' measurement of 'centrifugal force,' Galileo's principle of 'composition of forces,' Newton's law of equal action and reaction, were not conceived in terms of mere simultaneity and succession of movement apart from all idea of strain, of resistance, of operative energy. And the frequency with which Newton speaks of gravitation under the name 'attraction' is censured by Comte, as an indication that he was not free from

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the illusory notion of causation[1]. As the critic himself continually uses, and must use, the word 'force,' and speaks of one body 'acting upon another,' is it clear that he escapes his own censure? He thinks to do so by defining 'force' as 'movement, or tendency to movement;' and by remarking that 'two forces that impress upon a given body the same velocity in the same direction are regarded as identical, however different their origin, be it a contraction of animal muscle, or gravitation towards a centre of attraction, or the impact of a body, or the expansion of an elastic fluid[2].' But what is 'tendency to movement?' Is it a present fact in the body of which you predicate it? and yet not a present movement there? Then it is not a phenomenon so far; but only something that may turn out a phenomenon by and by; and how is such a present fact in the body conceivable but as a reserved *source* of motion? and the fact adduced, that we do not care from what origin two forces come which act upon a body in precisely the same way, does not prove that we treat them as without origin at all, and without operation, and simply as movements loose from the next change except in order of time. Instead of the advance of science eliminating the conceptions and language of causation, it has more and more developed and elaborated them, till they have become responsible for nearly the whole framework of modern doctrine; and to translate any recent physical treatise by Clerk Maxwell, or Tait, or Deschanel, with its exposition of Energy conserved and transmuted and dissipated, of attraction, repulsion, induction of currents, and lines of force, into the phraseology of coexistence and succession of phenomena would exhaust the patience, if not baffle the ingenuity, of Comte and Mill themselves. In short, it is precisely in the foremost rank of the 'positive' sciences that we find the most systematic departure from the 'positivist' anti-causal doctrine, and the most constant

[1] Phil. Pos. II. pp. 246–249.
[2] Ibid. I. p. 544.

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resort to the 'metaphysical conceptions' of agency behind phenomena which we are desired to dismiss as chimerical and obsolete.

Nor is it only the proximate 'metaphysical' mode of thought which thus proves to be compatible with the newest lessons of nature. The earlier 'theological' evinces the same persistency. For I hold it entirely arbitrary to attribute the wave of agnosticism which sweeps over the present age to our improved knowledge of the order of the world, except so far as that knowledge dissipates some Biblical preconceptions, and thus disturbs those whose belief has rested on mere authority. It is not among this immense multitude, but within the small circle of scientific thinkers alone, that the tests of Comte's law must be sought: they are the only witnesses of its last issues. It is undeniable that the witnesses are divided; not, so far as I can see, in any proportion different from that which the cleavage of thought produced in other ages of speculative doubt and denial: in the times of Epicurus; of Lucretius; of the Renaissance in Italy; of the Encyclopedists in France. With Comte's assertion in your mind, that every cultivated man has been a theologian in childhood, a metaphysician in youth, and a positivist in maturity, glance down the roll of honoured savans and discoverers since the re-birth of the scientific spirit, and the effrontery of his generalisation is apparent at once. His favourite heroes and 'precursors,' Bacon, Descartes, and Leibniz, give it no support: as applied to Galileo, Huyghens, and the Cassini, to Newton, Pascal, and De Moivre, the maxim is simply ridiculous. And if we are forbidden to expect its evidence so far from Comte's advent, contradiction still meets us in later generations: the whole spirit of John Dalton and Thomas Young, of the two Herschels and the two Ampères, are a protest against it. Are there any names more purely representative of the inductive method, carried into the newest department of physical research, than those of Oersted and Faraday? Of these two, the Englishman, in

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telling his last though to his countrymen, insisted, like Bacon, on the distinct spheres, but the harmonious co-existence, of inductive knowledge and religious faith; and the Dane left for posthumous publication an Essay to prove that 'One Mind pervades all Nature.' And notwithstanding the well-known voices that loudly appropriate the agnostic rule, there is no country eminent in modern science that does not record votes of high avail against it; from Fechner in Germany, from Pasteur in France, from the late Clerk Maxwell, from Tait and Balfour Stewart, from Carpenter and Allman in our own country.

Nor does history attest the triple law any more clearly than individual experience. Comte indeed extorts from it one typical piece of evidence, coextensive with the period which he submits to review: it is obtained by taking the Medieval Catholicism as the advent of monotheism; the revival of letters as its resolution into metaphysics; and the last two centuries as the passage to Positivism. Even if these links were firm and without flaw, they would supply but a fragment of needed illustration; for the Monotheism with which they begin is, according to Comte, only the last reach of the theological stage, and has to be evolved out of Polytheism, as that again emerges from Fetichism. Where then does he find those prior conditions which led up to the institution of the Catholic Church? In the Paganism of Rome and Greece! in itself a growth out of præ-Pelasgian worship of concrete objects; so that the genealogy of Christianity is to be sought in Olympus and the Alban Mount, and not, as we had supposed, in Palestine. This curious affiliation ought not perhaps to surprise us in a writer who requires nothing in a *cause* but *antecedence* to its effect; for, no doubt, the Christian civilisation came after the Pagan. But to treat the point of juncture between the two as the birth hour of Monotheism, and deduce the Church from the heathen Temple instead of from the Synagogue, is a distortion of history without parallel. The only notice which Comte takes of the Jewish people is to

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recognise their scattered presence in the cities of the Roman empire, at a time when, all independent states being extinct, the polytheistic divinities were baffled and stood idle in the Pantheon and unworshipped in the temple; and when the *orbis terrarum*, having become politically one, could no longer live under the divided Heaven; so that, when the unity of humanity forced men into unification of worship, the process was helped into shape by the vicinity everywhere of some monotheistic colonies as organising centres. These, however, were by no means necessary: so strong was the set of the social current in the direction which religion took, that, had they not been there, it would have forced its way to the same course by some slight detour. This theory exaggerates the *Præparatio Evangelica* which Christian writers on the 'Providence of History' have pointed out as furnished by the vast area of universal peace and common civilisation and free intercourse, opened by the early Roman empire to the missionaries of the Gospel. It treats this and other passive conditions of a favouring field, as if they could have grown the new religion without the sower and the seed. Nay, more: it ignores the fact that the seed itself, instead of making itself up out of the inorganic materials of a decaying Polytheism, was the living growth of a foreign Monotheism, matured and enriched through the harvests of many a century. In his determination to limit his historic survey to the European nations, Comte binds himself to find all that his theory requires within their boundaries, and virtually shuts his eyes to the elements of life which the winds and streams have brought thither from afar. He deals with the world, as if the great Oriental races had never been, or had left no legacy of thought and feeling to the West. Now and then he betrays, for a moment, some consciousness of the difficulties which their existence, especially that of the Jewish family, opposes to his doctrine; but they draw from him no concession; he simply pushes aside the inconvenient phenomena as anomalous intruders; the Jews were a

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peculiar people: they were born out of due time: they became *monotheistic 'prematurely!'* they had no business to be up so early: had they been aware of Comte's law, and set their timepiece by it, they would not have been so forward to disturb the house from its appointed ways. Such are the shifts to which a writer is driven, who insists on setting up the medieval Christianity as the typical example of evolved Monotheism, and on developing it out of the Greek and Roman Polytheism which it overthrew and dissipated. The religion of modern Europe notoriously does *not* descend from the same source as its civilisation, and is no continuation of the ancient culture. It had an origin to which the Pagan feeling entertained the intensest repugnance; and so long as the Roman culture was a living thing, no blending of the two was possible: the new religion and the old life remained hostile, till the latter had disappeared; and it was not till the revival of letters, when the old world had been gone nearly a thousand years, that the reconciliation could take place, and the separated streams of heathen and of Christian thought found any real confluence.

No position is more emphasised by Comte than this: that Monotheism carries with it, as its greatest benefit, a separation of the spiritual from the temporal power, while Polytheism unites the two. A glance at the Jewish and Mohammedan Monotheisms would have modified this judgment; for both of them are so far from exhibiting this separation that they serve as our standard examples of Theocracy;—in which there is no human legislator; and every executive officer, be he called king or caliph, priest or general, administers some part or other of one and the same unalterable Divine law, and is equally a minister of the King of kings. The separation of the two functions arises only where the spiritual obligations and the temporal have a different geographical extension, one of them being universal, the other local. With the Jews, as with polytheistic states trusting in national gods, both were local,

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their whole Law being a tribal inherited specialty. With the Mohammedans, both are universal, intended for the conquest and government of the world. But Christianity offers one religion to many nations, and is content to consecrate life from its inner springs and supply its moral character, leaving to each land the moulding of its external rules of action and relation, according to its genius, its history, and its needs. Hence it alone has instituted the distinction which Comte so much approves.

If from the alleged source we turn to the sequel of the medieval theological stage, the illustration of the triple law still seems to fail us. The whole break-up of the Catholic system, in its discipline, its hierarchy, its dogma, during the last five centuries, is presented to us as constituting the 'Metaphysical' stage of thought into which the 'Theological' necessarily resolves itself; and this epithet is especially applied, with a certain gusto of contempt, to the Protestant movement of open revolt. For the meaning of this word we are fortunately at no loss; for, in enouncing his Law, Comte supplies the distinctive mark of the 'metaphysical' state of mind, viz. that it seeks for the causes of phenomena in abstract entities, and no longer in supernatural volitions. How then does 'Protestantism' earn the word? What abstract entities does it set up, to work its problems of causation? What supernatural Will does it forego? In which of its communions, in which of its philosophies, does Divine agency play a less part in the life of the world and of humanity, than in the scheme of the older Church? In both forms of Christianity, God is the efficient presence alike in natural and spiritual phenomena, by methods fixed or free; if the younger conception differs on the whole from the earlier, it is rather, I should say, by more intensely spiritualising nature, than by naturalising spirit. The word 'metaphysical' must be altered therefore in its definition before it can be intelligibly applied to the contents of the Reformation movement.

And altered it certainly is, so as silently to fit its new

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purpose. It is used to denote, not the particular turn of thought which personifies entities, but any disintegrating influence which corrodes a prior theology, whether it produces another, or substitutes abstractions, or leaves a blank; so that the epithet covers the whole free play of the insurgent mind of Europe against the authority of the Medieval Church. By calling every critical and dissolving process 'metaphysics,' it is easily made out that metaphysics can do nothing but destroy. Limit the word to its proper significance, 'the disengagement of ultimate thoughts which must be held valid for things,' or, inversely expressed, 'the enumeration of realities guaranteed by ultimate necessities of thought;' and there are no more metaphysics in Comte's second stage than in the first; and no less in the third than in either. His own fundamental propositions,—that 'we can know only phenomena;' that 'knowledge by self-consciousness is impossible;' that 'causality is a fiction;' that 'personal identity is an illusion,'—are metaphysics pure and simple; and if he escapes the obsolete thing, it is by coolly assuming these *Principia*, and offering nothing but excommunication to all dissentients. The leaders in the intellectual and moral revolt of the sixteenth and following centuries paid more respect to the system which they desired to reform; and if, in bringing up their new metaphysics against the old, their batteries, in demolishing the enemy, sometimes exploded upon themselves, we need not regret that they did double duty, and cleared away two indefensible posts at once. Their fresh conceptions, the product of enlarging life, were usually superior to the crystallised assumptions of the ages past; but, when shaped into abstract principles, they advanced a claim which the tests of time and reflection were little likely to confirm. When the authority venerated for ages had once been shaken, the endeavour to recover a lost certainty turned with natural hope to the model of highest proof afforded by the mathematics, and looked out for *à priori* premisses with which infrangible links of inference might be forged; so that not

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in theology only, but in the first tentatives at ethical and political doctrine, and even in physics, recourse was had to the deductive method; with the inevitable result, that on the list of self-evident principles were set down, along with a few supplied by the very conditions of thought, a number of unconscious and arbitrary generalisations that bore the aspect of truth only till some one plucked off their mask. Hence the precarious and perishable character of much of the new doctrine; in view of which Comte is fully justified in asserting that by such a method of procedure nothing permanent could ever be raised; and that, however worthy may be the feeling embodied in such formulas as 'the right of private judgment,' 'the natural equality of men,' 'the sovereignty of the people,' they have only a relative and temporary function, and for durable intellectual use prove hollow and collapse. But, after all, it remains with good metaphysics to correct the bad, nor is there any other instrument discovered for sifting out first-hand truth from second-hand, and pure from mixed. If Descartes', or Grotius', or Cousin's first principles will not hold water, the fault is in their leaky vessels, and would not be mended by destroying the potter's and cooper's art, and having nothing to draw with from these deep wells.

The real relation of the three states of mind described as theological, metaphysical, and positive, admits of being presented with qualified recognition of their successive rise, but without allowing that the later supersedes the earlier. The phenomena which strike upon human attention and form the contents of our experience raise in us three questions, as to their *Source*, their *Scene*, their *Order:* the first, in virtue of our Causal intuition; the second (as before explained[1]), to supply their own correlative; the third, to capture the marks of their arrival. As causality other-than-ours is the pure counterpart of ours, the first question meets its answer in the Will which we discern in nature, and which at least terminates in being one. As the correlative

[1] See supra, 'The Limits of Knowledge,' p. 456.

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of a phenomenon is its permanent subject or seat, the second question is answered by naming its statical conditions. And as its order is determined by its place among synchronous companions and in a serial line, the third has its answer in mere terms of relative position and date. The first, or theological, answer gives therefore the *Causal* datum of the phenomenon; the second, or metaphysical, gives its *Conditional* data; and the third, or positive, gives its *Law*. Of these, it is evident that the two first are *Noumena*, guaranteed to us purely by the dual constitution of all relative thought; to us there cannot be a phenomenon that is not an effect: it is an emerging fact that cannot be conceived as an isolated existence, but only as produced: in the meaning of the word there are two factors, of which the idea of *Cause* is one. And so is it with the second datum. Phenomenon, without some subject that has it, some field in which it turns up, is unthinkable: to affirm it is to deny it, and it lies cancelled in the very act: the idea of change declines to appear but in antithesis to a permanent ground,—be it only Space on which it is superinduced. Again, therefore, we find ourselves dealing with *a relation;* one member of which is this *condition*. In both these instances, the implicit terms are supplied by the intellect itself, as the thinking power, and not by the external matter of the perception: they therefore repeat themselves in every experience: they are the *constants* of thought, inherent in it as a cognitive act, and present *ab initio*, whether attended to or not. Of the two, the Causal, from its dynamic character, and from its externality to the phenomenon itself, is the more impressive; and the more certain, as the antithetic counterpart to our own activity, to become explicit as an object of regard. But the *Conditions*, of Space, Time, Substance, as silent assumptions, incorporated in the very language of intelligence, become self-evident as soon as they are pointed out. When we come to the third mode of mentally treating phenomena, viz. to find their *Law*, these characteristics disappear. We have

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still to do with them as *in relation;* not, however, with their cause, or with their condition, but *with one another*, in their simultaneousness and their succession:—relations, which do not indeed exclude or discredit the others (as Comte appears to think), but do not need them; and which, as wholly external and lying in the matter perceived, have no constant element, beyond the resemblances distributed through an ever-varying experience. To detect and register and measure these resemblances, and group the facts observed in conformity with them, is the business of induction, and results, so far as it is accomplished, in a true expression of the *Order* of Nature. Here, it is evident, the whole operation deals with the *variables* of cognition.

Hence it follows that, in the main, the changes in knowledge, and the accessions to it, must be looked for only in this third field; from the vastness and fulness of which, compared with the narrow limits and feeble instruments of human observation, their advances cannot be other than slow and late. But, as each step secured facilitates the next upon its own series, and helps to define the neighbouring lines, the speed accelerates as the survey is pushed on; and seems at times to excuse the most daring dreams of unlimited expansion. In the two previous cases, the noumenal term of the relation being constant, the knowledge of it is constant too; however they may shift or multiply, the phenomena contemplated must always be from their cause and in their subject; and the intellectual recognition of this does not change with their variation or grow with their growth; it is a fulcrum of Reason, securing its stability, and not its adjustable arms, whose leverage is applied now to this problem, and now to that. There is, therefore, a real ground for the statement that, while Science makes progress, metaphysics stand still, always reproducing the same conceptions, never laying to rest the questions which they start. This is meant as a reproach; but, so far as it affirms a general truth, it announces a merit and not a fault, viz. that metaphysics faithfully vindicate, uphold, and de-

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liver the unchangeable and eternal factor in all knowledge, and prevent its being hustled out of view by the tramp and pride of its advancing columns. Metaphysics, so far as they are true to their work, are stationary, precisely because they have in charge, not what begins and ceases to be, but what always *is*. Science is ever on the march, because its sole care is spent upon the changes of the world in their relations to each other, and the story of their periods or their indefinite evolution. To compare the two and demand the same thing from them, is to mistake their nature; and to exalt the speed of science, at the expense of the fixity of metaphysics, is not less absurd than to praise motion for always making way, while disparaging space for still being what it ever was: as if the motion you prefer could be without the space which you reproach.

The stationariness, however, which is charged upon theology and metaphysics cannot be admitted without considerable qualifications. Though the underlying data of all phenomena, under the heads both of cause and of condition, are always the same Noumena, the known universe of phenomena which they cause and condition is continually expanding, and opening to view new or modified relations; and the conceptions we have of their producing will and their containing infinitude cannot fail to be enriched and exalted by this enlargement. The essence of the predicates is the same; but their scale and range of application are indefinitely magnified. Theology, too, has other roots in our nature than this causal intuition, and draws through them a nutriment and growth which it would be here irrelevant to trace. Moreover, the analysis from which any unimpeachable metaphysics can emerge is so difficult, and the approaches to them are beset by such a tangle of insidious abstractions, that many unsuccessful tentatives have inevitably diverted explorers from the true lines of search, and perhaps detain us still at some distance from the end in view. But it can hardly be denied that, especially since the time of Kant, the way is much clearer than it

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was; that, on the one hand, a host of fancied ultimate ideas have been legitimately dismissed as dressed-up abstractions; and that, on the other, the attempt to apply that method of discharge universally has signally failed. The improvement consists, I admit, not in the more that is known, but rather in the less that is mistaken; but at all events it rebukes impatient despair of the metaphysical problem, by exhibiting our besetting illusions, one after another, in the very act of vanishing away.

Comte's subordinate theory, of the three theological stages in the first act of his triple law, I must pass with slight notice. As a speculation, it is most ingeniously worked out; but it is left self-supported, without any adequate base of historical evidence, or even collateral corroboration from the probable analogy of existing barbarous and semi-barbarous tribes. This is not the philosopher's fault. The materials do not exist, probably never will exist, for anything like a safe inductive inference, as to any uniform path by which Monotheism has been reached. It is by no means determined even whether it comes first or last; if last, whether by movement on one line, or on more: and if on one, whether what is called 'Fetichism' is the starting point. The utterly loose structure of all the argument on these points which I have thus far seen, leaves, I conceive, no higher claim than belongs to any admissible psychological conjecture; and, as I have nothing better to offer, I withhold my foot from the trackless plain; nor will I try to show, that what others take for a clear road across its expanse is but a brilliant beam shot along it from the light and lenses of their own thought. One remark only will I allow myself. Suppose it to be true that invisible will is read by the human mind first into concrete objects, taken one by one; next, into classes of kindred things, or particular departments of nature; and, at last, into the universe at large; the process is perfectly homogeneous throughout, and is simply an expanding generalisation of the phenomenon to be explained,—a fusion of the many into the

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few, and of the few into the one. However grouped, however blended, the objects in the scene may be, the account given of them persists without change: Cause is Will at first: Cause is Will at last.

D. IDEA OF PROGRESSIVE HUMANITY, WHENCE?—The moment when the triple law revealed itself to Comte's 'young intelligence, imbued with revolutionary ardour,' constituted, in his view, an epoch in the life of humanity, because in it was born the true spirit of history, unknown even to his immediate predecessor, Condorcet [1]. Till then, Sociology was impossible, for want of one of its constitutive factors,—the idea of *Progress* as inherent in the life of society, and furnishing it with an ideal future, beyond the present order, as the present is beyond the past. To form this conception, there was need of three terms of comparison, tracing a continuous line of change, such as are furnished by the theological, metaphysical, and positive stages; whereas there had never been more than two; in the mediæval period, the consciousness prevailing, of superiority in the Christian organisation over the Pagan and Jewish, without any better future except in the life after death; and in the ancient world, the constitution of the actual State being tested by some conceived philosophic model which, if realised, would have only to stand still and be. Both to the theological and to the metaphysical modes of thinking, a stationary perfection presented itself as the object of aspiration; and, when once the true equilibrium was reached, nothing remained but to ward off external disturbance and cleanse away the germs of internal decay, and live on in social immobility. Prior, therefore, to the discovery of Comte's law, change was admissible only for removing obstacles to the attainment of an absolute type of order; but no sooner was that discovery made, than order itself came to consist of change in conformity with the detected law: the idea was started of an evolution of humanity, and for the vision of a

[1] Discours, p. 63.

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crystallised perfection was substituted that of an indefinite living growth.

So far as the criticism here given of the Greek theories of society is considered, I see only a true appreciation of their characteristic weakness;—a weakness which Comte himself excuses, on the ground of the inadequate range of historical experience for any wider induction at that early time. Certainly upon the Pagan nations the idea had not dawned, of an unfolding life in the communities of men, modifying their component proportions, and developing new functions from age to age; and neither in Plato's 'Republic' nor in Aristotle's 'Politics' have we anything comparable with Comte's measured but brilliant march through the stadia of Christian history. But that he should charge this defect upon the whole 'theological' stage of the human mind, and see no difference in regard to it between Greek and Jew, would be surprising, did we not already know how he treats people who get ideas into their heads 'prematurely.' The very essence of the Jewish monotheism is its recognition of an ordered plan opening out through all the ages, its faith in a Providence of history,—a faith which gives its finest literature the form of prophecy, and its sweetest lyrics the tone of aspiration. The nation's look was always prospective, towards a 'Kingdom of heaven,' a consecration of humanity by no means absolute or closed, but rich with indefinite contents. It is true that the expectation centred upon one land and race, and embraced but a dependent margin beyond; only, however, till it came into contact with the Christian spirit; for no sooner did its meaning break upon the convert of Damascus, than it burst into universality at once, and became a scheme of progress coextensive with the habitable earth, and unfolding so long as human life endures. It is also true that, even with the apostle Paul, the form of the conception was that, not of a law of spontaneous advance, but of a divinely wrought change, leading on to an intended end. But, unconsciously to himself, the very extension which he gave to the idea

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absorbed and annihilated this distinction; for whatever is done, according to plan and rule, everywhere and always, thereby ceases to be exceptional (i.e. miraculous), and takes its place in the system of natural law. Accordingly, when the personal peculiarities and mistaken chronology of the Pauline vision fell away, its inward thought remained and became permanent in the Christian theory of the world; which has never ceased to be imbued with faith in progress and perfectibility, and drawn on by ideal attractions to unattained heights of individual and social character. Whatever, therefore, may be the scientific merit of Comte's law, as defining the particular direction of intellectual movement in the human mind, it cannot be credited with the first suggestion of progress and of an indefinite capacity for moral development in persons and communities.

E. ETHICAL DOCTRINE.—In adverting next to Comte's Ethical doctrine, I regret that the requirements of my subject limit me to a consideration of its theoretic base, and withhold me from following it into the practical applications. On the former I can find no footing that is clear and safe. But his treatment of the 'Art of Morals,' though injured by fantastic details, is full of wisdom, and pervaded by a noble humanity. In his estimate of domestic life, as the miniature and school of the social; of the filial relation, as the source of reverence for ancestry and sympathy with an historic past; and of the parental relation, as throwing a like enthusiasm into the future; and of the fraternal, as the practising ground of all reciprocal sociabilities; of the sacredness of marriage, and the true place and influence of woman; of the importance, in education, of setting the affections to plead their own cause, and the suicidal folly of recommending sympathy by appeal to reason or to interest: in his aversion to the self-asserting claim of Rights, as suspending the consciousness of Duty: in his acceptance of fundamental moral rules, as no less inwardly self-attested and beyond discussion than the strictest demonstration:—he shows, as

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it seems to me, a profound insight into springs of human character and the needs of human life[1]. But all these wise counsels and appreciations assume an ethical constitution of our nature, involving especially two propositions, viz. (1) that the preponderance of affection over egoism is possible to will, though not necessitated by law; and (2) that, over and above the measure of energy in affection, there is such a thing as Duty, rendering this preponderance imperative. In the foundations of Comte's theory I find no security provided for either of these propositions; and, what is equally remarkable, I find an absolute identification of preponderant affection, however brought about, with Moral character or obedience to Duty.

On this last point scarcely a word would be necessary, after placing in juxtaposition the two states which are mistaken for each other, were it not that the confusion which it involves is apparently becoming habitual in modern treatises on ethics. It amounts to an illusive retention of an eviscerated moral vocabulary. If I am already so constituted as to feel the moral differences among my springs of action, of course I shall know that, among those which ought to prevail, the benevolent sympathies occupy a very large (though not an exclusive) place; and were my problems of conduct written out, the majority of them would consist in securing this preponderance. But the mere presence in my nature of an ascendant affectionate instinct, apart from any sense of its relative worth, does not constitute me a moral being, or my surrender to it a moral act. In many animal tribes the maternal instinct dominates over every other, and almost suspends the operation of self-maintaining energy, nay, even rushes on self-destruction; yet no one puts such victims of an absorbing impulse on a footing with the voluntary hero of love that is also duty. When, therefore, Comte, in defining his ethical requirements, names as his 'universal principle' the preponderance of the sympathetic over the individual instincts, he is so far

[1] Discours, pp. 90–96.

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from covering, as he says, the *ensemble* of morality[1], that he does not even reach it at all, but describes only an affectional constitution possible to a nature wholly unmoral. Love is not synonymous with duty.

Turning now to the first postulate on which his practical counsels rest,—that the preponderance of affection over egoism is voluntarily possible,—let us see whether his theory concedes it. In the first place, the preponderance has to be acquired; for by nature 'our active life' is 'essentially egoistic,' and our sympathetic feelings have, in comparison, but a 'feeble energy'; and as we glance over the different members of the altruistic series, we find the same rule prevailing: at every step we pass to the less and less energetic but more and more elevated[2]. This original relation of strong and weak requires to be inverted. In the next place, the theory offers us no personal agent to perform this feat; for it makes the personality consist exclusively of the selfish, as distinguished from the social impulses, and acknowledges no such thing as optional will, but resolves volition into the mastery gained by the stronger; so that nothing can happen except what arises from relative strength. In the third place, then, it remains to consider what provision can be found, within these limits, for transferring the centre of gravity from personal selfishness to universal love. This problem in mental dynamics leaves us, so far as I can see, completely in the dark. He proposes no doctrine, like Hartley's, for evolving new qualities by chemical composition or 'association' of ideas, and extracting disinterested affections from selfish data: he does not profess to *convert*, but to lay to sleep, the egoistic instincts: their organs keep their old lodgings, and go their old ways; but, through the advance of their rivals, get fewer opportunities. These rivals having started at a disadvantage, what has changed the balance and enabled them to win? From among vague and wandering replies I can only select the more definite. The

[1] Discours, pp. 88, 89. [2] Ibid. pp. 37. 90.

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sympathetic instincts are developed, it is said, by constant exercise in education and subsequent experience. This certainly accounts for their energy in the present being greater than in the past; but not for its having the upper hand over its former masters; for they too have been as busy as the rest, and have had equal chance of growth. Again, Comte claims, through his hierarchy of sciences, to have deprived egoism of the support of reason; for, has he not shown Sociology to be the crown of knowledge? and the social point of view, therefore, to be the regulative principle, to which, accordingly, the personal must henceforth acknowledge its subjection? and is not this tantamount to saying that 'the heart,'—the sympathetic order of feeling,—must take the lead, and, in doing so, may plume itself on having brought over reason to its side'? I should be sorry to underrate the value of our philosopher's alliance; but that a selfish man will give up his aims lest he should spoil the symmetry of the scientific pyramid, and become a convert to his sympathies in order to preserve it, appears to me too sanguine an expectation. Even if his egoism should insist on feeling reasonable, and not contradicting Sociology, he need not despair, any more than Hobbes and Bentham before him, of building up a social theory on the basis of self-love, and proving that the equilibrium of collective well-being is best found by every one taking care of his own portion as far as others will let him, and giving no more heed to theirs than must be paid as the price of their help. Nay, Comte himself describes the final ascendency of the affective states as the *subordination of the theoretic impulse* (which, I suppose, is identical with 'reason') to 'sentiment' or feeling; so that his position resolves itself into the paradox, that at a certain point of development it becomes rational no longer to consult the reason.

The main reliance, however, of the Positive as of the Utilitarian philosophy for the suppression of egoism, is on the pressure of public opinion. This, it is distinctly said,

[1] Discours, pp. 36, 37.

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is 'the moral power.' A '*power*' it may be, so far as it prevents or modifies the spontaneous action of the individual; but '*moral*' it is not, so far as it merely alters the balance of his interests, and affects him as an external coercion upon what else would be his desire; his motive impulse is the same, under a different reckoning of conditions. Still, this social force may perhaps solve our dynamic problem, and secure the preponderance of the altruistic tendencies. Is it competent to this? It would seem at first view certain enough that, in a conflict between the single and the collective will, the social voice must vote down the individual, and enforce subservience to the general good: so that everybody would be against self-love, and demand its sacrifice to the claims of others. This presumption, however, is by no means unconditionally true. Its validity depends on the assumed constitution of the human nature of which it is affirmed; and it fails (as will be explicitly shown when we treat of the Utilitarian ethics) under the particular condition to which Comte binds himself, of a fundamental and universal dominance of the self-regarding desires. It is precisely and only because we are *not* made upon this pattern that we take sides, not with the self-seeking, but with the self-forgetting.

In vain, therefore, do we seek in this doctrine for either any psychological law enabling the weak sympathetic instincts to master the stronger egoistic, or any moral ground for the assertion that they *ought* to do so. It provides no *binding* influence beyond the foreign pressure of opinion, which cannot make a duty where there was none before: to call *Right* into existence something else is needed than the conflict of many wills against one, or the mandate of the loudest majority. Comte is not entitled, by the terms of his expressed theory, to speak of *Duties* at all, or use language denoting higher or lower merit. The defect, however, was in his theory, not in himself: his writings are imbued with an intense moral feeling: he lays the utmost stress upon the sentiment of Duty; and its deep root in his

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nature may perhaps be the very reason why he gives no account of it, but assumes it as self-evident that the social sympathies *ought to prevail*, and so sets himself to make out that they *can* prevail. Need I say, that this is not Positive science, but *intuitive morals?* What else indeed can we make of his remarkable statement, that moral rules are to be laid down as self-evident and beyond discussion; inasmuch as, by a true knowledge of ourselves, we read them in every affection, thought, habit, and action, with a conviction as complete as the strictest demonstrations could give,—a conviction arising simply from their intimate relation to the noblest instincts. Yet more explicitly he adds, that the reason why we must not rely on *proof* to produce moral convictions is, that proof is necessarily *objective*, fetched from observation and judgment exercised *on others;* whereas appreciation, to be moral, must be *subjective*, drawn from the inward consciousness of our own character[1]. These propositions alight upon momentous truths; but it is curious to receive them from one who habitually ridicules the 'pretended possibility' of self-knowledge, amounting as they do to an explicit assertion of intuitive and psychological morals.

F. POSITIVIST RELIGION.—To the pure *savans* who appreciated Comte's masterly conspectus of the sciences in his *Philosophie Positive*, and welcomed its sentence of superannuation against theology and metaphysics, nothing, I believe, was ever more surprising than his reappearance as author of his 'Catechism' and High Priest of the Religion of Humanity. That a writer for whom there was nothing beyond nature, and nature, including man, resolved itself into clustered and regimented phenomena, invariably but faultily combined;—a writer who owned no possible except the actual, and no rational exercise of thought except, from the fact that is, to foresee the fact that will be; who treated

[1] Discours, pp. 95, 96. Yet elsewhere we find him saying that 'Positivism bases moral science far more on observation of others than of oneself.' Catéchisme, pp. 58, 59.

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with habitual contempt, as an idolatry of abstractions, all admission of causes, attractions, repulsions, affinities, still more of any alternative power of will;—should suddenly proclaim himself the founder of a new religion, engaged in the contemplation of ideals, intent on the conversion of the world, with a catalogue of saints, a ritual of worship, a calendar of stated prayers, seemed to many an Academician an indication of premature dotage. Yet his first great work is not without features which might have prepared discerning readers for a practical philosophy, and especially for an estimate of man, very different from the ordinary naturalism of Diderot and D'Holbach. They too had brought the study of human life and thought into the same line of knowledge with astronomy, chemistry, and physiology; but no sooner had they seized the idea of the reign of Law throughout them all, than they fancied it must be *the same law* a little disguised, and strained their ingenuity to make physical rules suffice to do the work of chemistry, and chemical that of physiology, and physiological that of mind; so as to resolve all into modes of motion and bring out the result, 'Man a machine.' This attempt, to reduce the distinctive phenomena of each higher science to the terms of its predecessor, is denounced by Comte as a spurious generalisation: he calls it *Materialism;* and in opposition to it insists that each step as we ascend the scale, though resting on the lower, lands us in the midst of new laws, depending on fresh conditions and beyond the range of the prior calculus. He would never listen, therefore, to any claim of mechanical theory, except within the limits of the physical heavens and earth; he held it self-condemned, the moment it was pushed into the provinces of biology and human character.

This principle might have been expressed in purely quantitative terms, by saying that the *simpler* law was incompetent to explain the *more complex*, or inversely, that the more complex could not be resolved back into the simpler; i.e. he might have taken the sciences as having

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no other difference than in comprehension. But he recognises in them also a graduated rank as higher or lower; and by calling their series a '*hierarchy*' admits his perception of a qualitative difference upon a scale of worth or excellence. In this he oversteps the bounds of Science, which, as a study of the time and space order of phenomena, knows nothing of any better and worse, and has no preference for heat vibrations over light, for nitrogen over carbon, for human sensations over the pig's; and which, even in its cognisance of feeling and impulse, takes account of them only as facts in the world's history, to be reckoned with like the moving wind and the falling rain. These qualitative comparatives constitute a complete breach of the neutrality of science, and imply a measurement of things by a preconceived standard of *the good;* and nothing is plainer than that Comte carried such standard intuitively with him into his estimate of phenomena, placing the organic above the inorganic; and within the former, the human as supreme; and among the human, the affective above the intellectual; and finally, the sympathetic emotions above the egoistic. Not only does he *assume* this climax of quality, as inherent and self-evolved in the very experience of the mental states, and as supplying a natural principle of arrangement for the corresponding phrenological organs, but he designates the difference among them as *moral*, and as giving to that word its essential meaning. 'In spite of its pretensions,' he says, 'intellectual force is not at bottom more moral than material:' 'in our nature there is nothing directly moral but Love: it alone tends to give to social feeling the ascendency over personal[1].' Of the superiority thus claimed and described he forbids us to look for 'proofs:' he dissuades us from trying to find it by judgment of others: it is a 'subjective appreciation' involved in the self-conscious springs of our own character. He therefore lives and writes, whether he is aware of it or not, under the feeling that our nature is subject to an authority higher than its wishes and not

[1] Discours, p. 206.

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borrowed from its associates, which makes its inward experience a story of Duty, and its outward world a scene of right and wrong. A mind which takes up this station, think and speak as it may of its estrangement from temples and theologies, is nevertheless upon the threshold of a religion.

That Comte's idea of religion comprises many noble elements of ethical doctrine and discipline ought not to be hidden from us by the grotesque scheme of ritualism to which they are committed, or the hostile attitude assumed towards earlier faiths and philosophies from which they are unconsciously borrowed. He truly teaches that religion is heart-worship, directed upon what is supreme in the universe: that for us the highest conceivable is represented by the affective, intellectual, and moral activity of man, perfected in disinterestedness and self-sacrifice: that this highest is realised in our nature thus far only partially and in scattered instances, rising as the ages pass, but is the ideal destination of a continuous humanity; and that the admiring and venerating contemplation of transcending examples in history and life powerfully rebukes our own shortcomings and fosters the secret enthusiasm of heroic goodness. In all this he remains within the genuine essence of religion, as a personal affection of transcendent reverence and trust towards a higher personality. But these social and historical venerations, as he himself admits, are but subsidiary lines of approach, converging towards the central shrine where the adoration is consummated; they are minor religions, exercised upon suggestive symbols, and keeping the mind in tune for the last act of utter homage and self-surrender to the All-Perfect. We cannot but ask our guide, then, to lift the veil from that 'holy of holies,' and show us that ultimate object, which gives significance to all the rest. What does he produce? Nothing but a looking-glass, in which we see the image of our own expectant looks and awestruck thought! no highest person, no reality at all, nothing that would be there if we were not; only a phantom

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blind and dumb that knows us not, and is but a phenomenon of ourselves! We are to worship our own ideal of humanity, i.e. our conception of what we should be glad to think our nature might hereafter become. Need I enumerate its disqualifications for any such homage? (1) We do not fixedly believe in it as prophetic, but only transiently imagine it as not impossible. (2) If we did, it would be the ideal of *a race*, not of individual minds; and men do not worship races. (3) If they did, they would offend against the first principle of Positivism, by becoming victims of abstract ideas. (4) A conceptual future, though an object of hope, cannot be an object of worship, not being there to receive it; and no one consciously addresses adoration to nothing. (5) If a Divine future is regarded as intentionally produced by a Divine agent in the present and past, it will certainly deepen the sentiments of worship towards its source; but if it be regarded as blindly worked out from the lowest antecedents, it assumes a fatalised character from which religious feeling retreats. (6) And above all, though what we worship is ideal, relatively to us, i.e. not in our experience, but in our thought, it is not this negative character, this absence from all but conceptual existence, that renders it an object of homage; on the contrary, it is precisely *as reality* immediate though infinite, present though eternal, as the *certain* ground of all being, instead of perhaps coming to be, as the Living and Loving original of all our higher vision of life and love, that such an object draws forth our trust and veneration, and moulds us by personal affection to the likeness of the All-Good.

This supreme faith it is which supports and inspires all the lesser religions of human admiration and reverence. The broken gleams of loveliness and sanctity in character penetrate us with mysterious power, from their relation to the infinite light of a Divine beauty and holiness. Take away that relation, and they become fruitful in idolatry, artistic and heroic. Invert the relation, treat them as passing contributions towards a *Grand-Être* that is forming

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by *epigenesis*, and is meanwhile worshipped for what it is *going to be*, and they can but foster the sickliest sentimentality, and introduce into religious language a perversion ruinous to all veracity. In the ancient Paganism there was much that was morally worse, but not much that was intellectually more humiliating, than the worship of a 'Supreme being' endowed at present with 'a nutritive apparatus[1],' 'not yet fully formed till after the assimilation of all its organs[2],' but 'eminently developable[1],' and 'composed of His own adorers, though superior to each[3],' and therefore 'necessarily made up of separable elements[4],' but at every stage 'always ready to render a just homage to His different precursors[5].'

It would take me too far from the great lines of Comte's philosophy were I to comment, in any adequate way, on his historical criticism of religion in Christendom. It contains, as it seems to me, a wonderful mixture of true insight and of unaccountable illusion. Of the latter no more remarkable instance presents itself than his unqualified identification of Christianity with egoism, and his assertion that it necessarily denies the existence of all disinterested affections in man[6]. This misconception arises from the idea that the seeking of *Salvation* is the supreme end in view with every believer. He forgets that, even if it were so (and this is by no means to be admitted without great qualification), the end is not egoistic, but human, and, no less than any other universal good, appeals to the altruistic just as it does to the personal enthusiasm; and it is difficult to understand how he could miss so obvious a fact, in the presence of the vast and continuous efforts of missionary zeal, and the whole army of self-sacrificing labourers, from whose compassion have sprung the distinctive institutions of European benevolence. As for the theoretic recognition of disinterested affections in our nature, it would be curious to know in what ancient philosophy he would find it: how

[1] Discours, p. 329. [2] Ibid. p. 384. [3] Ibid. p. 388.
[4] Ibid. p. 323. [5] Ibid. p. 391. [6] Catéchisme, pp. 149, 150.

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he would explain the prevailing rejection and ridicule of it by modern writers disaffected towards Christianity, as in the school of Hobbes and Helvetius; and, on the other hand, the vindication of it, in direct reply to them, by a host of Christian authors, like Butler and Hutcheson. Unlike Renan, he seems to have gained his impressions of the religion which he criticises from some repulsive teaching or examples, and without approaching the writings of the evangelists and apostles; for apparently he had not heard of the 'law of love' which was given as its 'new commandment,' and made all who came under it 'members one of another,' and enabled them to return their enemies 'blessing for cursing:' or of the question, 'he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen:' or of the principle, 'he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love:' 'he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.' Nay, when finally setting his 'Positive' doctrine 'free of theological oppression and metaphysical dryness,' and condensing it into a maxim that shall hold it all, he alights, unconscious of their source, upon the words of Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive[1];' and yet this religion, which supplies him with the best expression of his own,—this, whose supreme thought and pathetic symbol consecrate self-sacrifice,—he characterises as 'an immense cupidity and a servile terror[2].' Paradox surely can no further go.

GENERAL CONCLUSION OF PART I.

Metaphysical and Physical theories have now been passed under review in sufficient variety to answer the question, whether they furnish, or as a class are capable of furnishing, an adequate base for the indispensable postulates of ethical doctrine. Each in turn, whatever its merits in other respects, has been pronounced, for reasons given, incompetent in this one relation; and, among the reasons, there are some which

[1] Discours, p. 216; Acts xx. 35. [2] Discours, p. 392.

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obviously apply to the series as a whole. They all descend upon man and take him up for study as a particular article in the created furniture of the world; and bring with them preconceptions of the contents and resources of the world before and beyond him. Of these they all regard him as the product: the factors of his nature are cosmically given, predetermining what, in every instance, it shall be: by no means excluding numerous differences and a range of modification in individual growth, but all covered by the scope of the prior causality, and not otherwise referable to the Self. Every phenomenon of my life, therefore, active no less than passive, is an arrival from 'foreign parts:' at the moment it may be from within; but the 'within' itself is from without; and I am only a world-parasite, nurtured by sap drawn through other roots. All that I am, all that I feel, all that I do, is dependent and derivative, and though chargeable upon my will, recoverable by that will from an agency beyond. Under these conditions, it is in vain that Plato saves in me an uncreated part, that brings to the mortal birth millennial memories of its heavenly abode: this is no more my human self than is the corporeal organism with which it is blended; both are but elements of my nature, contributing different data to my experience, the one, glimpses of truth and beauty, the other, varieties of sensible pleasure and pain. If each works in me in its own way, be it with opposing or with concurrent force, and if I am wholly made up of them, what am I but either the theatre or the resultant of their play? Nothing is possible to me but to be the storehouse for the delivery now of the godlike, now of the brute constituents of my life. No new and responsible subject is set up by any mere ligament of fate and circumstance which may unite the Divine and the animal into an inseparable organism, and send it as a twin-birth into the world. If all that is good in me is the unextinguished residue of a preexistent state, and all that is evil an incident of corporeal structure, I am not the source of the first, and can no more feel compunction for the second than

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I could repent of birth-sin. Should there arise any conflict between the two, they settle it together by trial of strength upon the field, but without the mediation, of my consciousness.

Nor do we gain any scope for moral agency by removal into the Immanental metaphysics. The dual composition of the universe out of Thought and Extension, the joint expressions of God, which form parallel chains of separate causation, turns up in man, and makes his constitution of mind and body a partnership of two necessities. His life is made up of their synchronous histories, written in distinct columns, side by side; and, by skilled observers, any unseen phenomenon in one may be inferred, either from its antecedent in its own line or its companion in the other. Alternative there is none; and what seems uncertainty in human things is but indistinctness in our vision of them, the wavering guesses we make at objects obscured by floating mist. True it is that Descartes, the founder of this School, refused to discredit his consciousness of freedom: yet he left it confessedly unreconciled with the Divine preordination of all things; and no sooner did his system develop itself in the hands of his followers than its tendency became clear: in riveting its logical joints, the clinging shred of ethical faith was inevitably struck off. Malebranche would hear of no Cause in the universe but God; and formulated the impotency of man in the saying, '*we are not agents, but only spectators, even of our own history.*' And Spinoza, at the very outset of his speculations, takes up a position which negatives the essential presupposition of Morals, when he affirms that nothing is *possible* except the *actual*. If the two spheres are absolutely coextensive, if conduct and character have always been all that they could be, if there is no interval between what is likely to be and what might be, then there is no sense in saying that this or that *ought* to be, and that we are *bound* to bring it to pass.

So long as we allow ourselves to speculate on any substantive entity at all behind the changes of ourselves and of the world, we have not yet shut out the *possibility* of moral

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obligation: whether it is present or absent will depend upon what the entity is. If *Intending Mind*, the conditions remain of the better Will or the worse: if *Optionless Necessity*, no living act is more right or wrong than another. But even this contingent possibility of duty disappears, as soon as we resolve to dispense with the metaphysical background of all intelligence, and, with the Positivist, find our all in all in the grouping and succession of phenomena assumed to be invariable. When Comte lays down the maxim, that every proposition is unmeaning which is irreducible to a simple *statement of fact*, particular or general, he ties down all thought to what has been, what is, what will be, and treats as folly all ideal alternatives that shame us with the vision of what ought to be. When Philosophy has thus flung its own essence away, it shrinks into coalescence with *Science;* which culminates in the application of a known law to the deciphering of the past and the future. The door is thus rudely slammed in the face of Ethics; their chief concern being with possibilities which, unhappily, are *not* facts, but aspire to become so. True it is, that in order to verify them as possibilities, appeal must be made to adequate 'facts;' not, however, of the external kind intended by Comte's word; but of that inward experience and self-knowledge which, disowned by him, the Moralist takes as the true key to the capabilities of human nature.

The rejection of teleology, which begins with Descartes and extends to Comte, appears also difficult to harmonise with any moral theory of life. In the absence of intending thought in the universe, the whole becomes empty of any ends in view, any antithesis of good and evil operating upon an apprehending Mind; and how is it conceivable that a being, thus *without preference*, should exercise any moral government, pledged to administer the world with constant regard to distinctions of character? Accordingly, the denial of Final Causation in the Divine nature is usually extended, in effect though not in terms, to the human; i.e. the act of choice, which seems to be freely directed upon

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an alternative end, is explained away as necessarily determined from behind by antecedent conditions, so as really to be a linear continuation of an infrangible series, and reduce the apparent problem between a better and a worse to an illusion. Thus an unmoral cosmos gives an unmoral human life; and to take away ideal affections from the Soul of souls is to bring a blight upon the possibilities of conscience anywhere.

Such appear to me the ethical disqualifications of the theories hitherto reviewed. Were their authors then destitute of moral affections and convictions? What copious indications of the contrary their lives and writings afford, no reader of the foregoing pages can fail to observe. The philosopher's thought is seldom the exact, and never the coloured, photograph of himself: it shows him as he sits still and meditates, not as he lives and moves and has his being; and did we see him in the flush of indignation, or the surprise of grief, or the melting of contrition, startling images would pass before us that would seem impossible to emerge from that calm statuesque figure. He is not an intellectual automaton stirred by the wires of speculation; the instincts of nature rush in, and interpolate many a burst of action and affection which the logical reason cannot overtake. With a noble inconsistency, all the great writers whose doctrine we have studied betray the tenacious vitality of the intuitive consciousness of duty, throughout the very process of cutting away its philosophic roots; and Plato, in his 'divine wrath' at the tyrant flung into Tartarus; Malebranche, self-extinguished in the Absolute Holiness; Spinoza, lifted from the thraldom of passion into the freedom of Infinite Love; Comte, on his knees before the image of a Perfect Humanity, are touching witnesses to the undying fires of moral faith and aspiration.

END OF VOL. I.

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